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LECTURES

ON THE

SECOND COMING.

BY

J. N. DARBY.

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LECTURES

ON THE

SECOND COMING.

LECTURE I.

(1 THESSALONIANS i.)

WHAT I would desire to bring before you is the coming of the Lord as the proper hope of the church, and to show you that it is constantly, increasingly brought before it as such by the Spirit of God. When once the foundation is laid of His first coming as that which brings personally peace and salvation, and even before it—so far as it is a means of awakening the conscience—the one thing the saints were taught to look for was the coming of the Lord. No doubt the first thing the soul needs to know is the ground of its salvation. When this is known the Lord Himself becomes precious to the believer, and when the church was in a healthy state we shall find that the hearts of the saints were altogether set upon Him, and looking for His coming.

And now our hearts should understand, as I shall show you from Scripture was the case then, that the coming of Christ is not some strange speculation, or the advanced idea of a few, but was set before the

church as elementary and foundation truth, and formed a part of all their habits and feelings, and mingled itself with every thought. It was and is the keystone of all that keeps up the heart in this solitary place, (looking at it as journeying through the wilderness,) and with a heart full of love for God, and the desire to see Christ, we can appreciate the apostle's prayer for us :—"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the *patient waiting* for Christ.*" We have not long to wait, and it is worth being patient for.

We shall find too that the teaching of Scripture as to Christ's second coming, casts wonderful light on the value of His first coming. For His second coming, as regards the saints, is to complete, as regards their bodies, (so bringing them into the full result of salvation,) that work of life-giving power Christ has already wrought in their souls, founded on the complete title in righteousness which He has effected for them on the cross. He comes to receive them to Himself, that where He is there they may be also, to change their vile bodies and fashion them like His glorious body. For the saints the resurrection is a resurrection of life, not of judgment. It is a raising in glory, or changing into it by the Lord's power, those that are already quickened and justified.

When people, Christian people too, are looking for judgment, and saying with Martha, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," they forget the judgment of the quick; that then is the judgment of this world; they are all caught eating and drinking, and sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not

* Properly, "the patience of Christ," who is also waiting.

escape. People don't like that: they put off God's judgment to a vague and indefinite period, when they hope all will be well. They think that then will be decided their final state—they trust, for blessing. There is surely a judgment; but all their thoughts about it are a mistake; The matter is decided now. "He that believeth is not condemned, and he that believeth not is condemned already."

If we receive the statements of Scripture all is as simple as possible:—That the first coming of Christ to do His Father's will was so complete in its efficacy, that they who belong to that first coming, who have part in its efficacy by faith, are cleansed, justified, forgiven by its virtue, and that when He comes the second time He comes to bring them to glory. The moment I get hold of the truth that the coming is, for believers, to receive them to Himself, the moment I see that His coming the second time is to bring in the glory, to change us into His own likeness and to have us with Him, it affects everything, instead of being an unimportant thing. I believe death is the most blessed thing that can happen to a man; but it is not the thing I am looking for. I am looking to see Him. He might come to-morrow, or to-night, or now. If He did, don't you think it would spoil all your plans? Suppose you thought He might come, would it not make a difference in your thoughts? You know it would. Suppose a wife expects her husband to return from a journey, don't you think there would be an effort to have everything ready?

Another thing I have found to be specially blessed is, that it connects me with Christ so nearly; I do not think merely of going to heaven and being happy—a vague thought that. Of course, I shall be perfectly

happy. Surely we shall. The Divine presence will shed sure and endless blessing around. But One is coming, whom I know, who loves me, who has given Himself for me, whom I have learned to love. I shall be with Him for ever. Christ becomes personally more in view, more the object of our thoughts. Nothing so powerful as that, and nothing so powerful as Scripture for everything. It deals with the soul in the power of Divine light. It reveals Christ, brings the heart's judgment into His presence. It convicts every thought of the heart, showing what it is in truth.

There are three ways in which Christ is pointed to in Scripture :—on the cross , at His first coming ; sitting on the right hand of God ; and He is coming again. In the first He has laid the foundation of that which I have in Him. The foundation was on the cross, and now that He is sitting on the right hand of God He has sent us the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, while waiting His return, giving to those in whom He dwells the full certainty of faith as to the efficacy of His work and their own redemption : God's love and their own adoption thus leading them to desire with ardent hope His coming again.

Having thus given a general idea of the place Christ's coming holds in Scripture, I will take a few passages in different parts of the word, without going fully into them now, to show that it is the great truth of Scripture hope, and that all the thoughts, feelings, hopes, interests of God's children are connected with it. That not only it is not a false, but that it is not a rare or strange idea, but enters into the whole structure of Christian feeling.

1 Thes. i. 9, 10. " For they themselves show of us

what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." Here we find that the world was talking about this expectation of the Christians, so sure was their expectation and so strong the influence which it exercised on their conduct. They (the disciples) were looking for God's Son from heaven; it formed a part of that which the heathen were converted to—the present waiting for God's Son from heaven, so that the world took notice of it.

1 Thess. ii. 19. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" Most beautiful here to see the affection of Paul for the saints; but to what did his heart look as the time when these affections would be satisfied in their blessing? The coming of Christ.

Again, as regards *holiness*, we see exactly the same thing in 1 Thess. iii. 12, 13. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." The coming of Christ, and His coming with all the saints, so that it can confer but one thing, was so near to his spirit that he looks at their being found perfect then, as the object his heart desired.

And in 1 Thess. iv. 13-18. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will

God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." We find that, instead of the Lord's coming being a strange doctrine, while he could not look for the Christian's dying without his going to heaven, yet the comfort he gives is not that, but their return with Jesus. Death did not deprive them of that ; God would have them with Him.

First, beloved friends, note here the full assurance expressed, for living and dead saints alike. How do people persist in saying it is impossible to tell on this side the grave ! The apostle does tell for both. The first coming of Christ has so finished redemption and the putting away of sin, that His second is glory and being with Him for the dead and living saints. But see how present the coming of the Lord was to their minds. If I were to comfort friends of a departed saint by saying that God would bring him with Jesus when He came again, what would they think of me ? I was mad or wild. Yet such is the comfort Paul gives to the Thessalonians, and no other, though he plainly teaches elsewhere the soul of the saint will go to heaven when he dies.

But these examples show how the coming of the Lord mixed itself with every thought and feeling of

Christianity then; so in his wish for Christians in 1 Thess. v. 23, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." But the world rejects this news, and the church becomes worldly, has lost her value for it. Not so the first disciples; *their* hearts were attached to their Master, and they desired to see Him, to be like Him. They waited, as a present condition of soul, for God's Son from heaven.

I have gone through these passages not merely to prove the doctrine, but to show the way in which it connected itself with the whole of the Christian's life. We will turn back now to see the universal testimony of Scripture to the truth of this doctrine, and the various aspects it takes: and first Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." When the disciples ask Him the time when these things are to be He tells them to watch, and in the 44th verse, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

But the Lord goes farther in the following parables, which apply to Christians. The *mark* of the evil servant given there is, that he says in his heart, My lord delays his coming, and thereupon begins to eat and drink with the drunken. They lost the expectation of the church, and sank down into hierarchical power and into

the world, into comfort and pleasure. But the Bridegroom did tarry, and the church lost the present expectation of Christ and the blessed fruit of it on their souls.

Matt. xxv. 1. "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." There is the essence of the church's calling. *They went forth;* but, while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept; saints as well as professors, no exception; they all lost the sense of what they had gone out to, and gave up watching. And what is it that aroused them from the sleepy state into which they had fallen? Verse 6, "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." They had to be called out again; they had got into the world, into some place to sleep more comfortably, just where the professing church is now, eating and drinking with the drunken, and the cry is, I trust, again going forth, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." And what made the church depart from the sense of what they had been called out to was saying, just what people say, and Christian people too, are saying now, "The Lord *delayeth* his coming." They don't say, He will not come, but He delays it; we are not to expect Him.

I will pass over Mark: not that there are not plenty of passages there, but that what we find there is substantially the same as what we find in Matthew. I will go on therefore to Luke xii. 35-38, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh

and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants." Remark here, that the waiting for the coming of Christ is what characterizes the Christian according to the mind of Christ. Men speak of death, but death is not "my Lord."

We find the same truth pressed on men in the 17th chapter, verses 22-37, where this passage does not warn people as to sin, but as to the unholy thought that the world may go on indefinitely. As soon as Noah entered into the ark, the flood came, and destroyed them all. As soon as the church is taken up, Satan having filled men's hearts with lies, judgment will come. And as in the days of Noah and of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, planted and builded, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is *revealed*. Remark here how impossible it is to apply this to the great white throne: when He sits on the great white throne the heavens and the earth flee away, there is a total destruction of everything; men will not be eating, drinking, planting, building then.

Look now at chapter xxi. 26-36. People apply this to the destruction of Jerusalem: that is spoken of in the 21st verse of this chapter: "Then let them which are in Jerusalem flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto." But then, after that, Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, the time run-

ning on now till the last beast's wickedness is filled up ; then come the signs, and the Son of man is revealed.

John xiv. 1-3. "Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." Such is the promise left us, the comfort Christ gave to His disciples when He was leaving them ; He comes to receive them to Himself.

Acts i. 10, 11. "And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." This too, though it be Christ coming in the clouds, is not the great white throne : but what is striking here is, they are losing Christ ; and what is the angels' word to them ? "Why are you looking up into heaven ? He will come again in the same way." What the angels brought before them to comfort them when Jesus left them was, that He would come again ; and what Scripture points peoples' hearts to, to comfort and strengthen them, is, that He *is* coming again. It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment. That is the allotted portion of the seed of the first Adam ; but as that is man's portion, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many ; and to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. ix. 27, 28) ; and Christ is waiting only till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

We are not even all to die. "We shall not all die:" (1 Cor. xv. 51.) Rom. xi. 25: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." When the church is formed, its last member being brought in, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, Israel will be saved as a nation, and the Deliverer come out of Zion. Christ will appear for their deliverance.

Again, turn to 1 Cor. i. 6,7: "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

All the promises of the prophets will be fulfilled at that coming. Turn back to Acts iii. 19-21. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when (*read*, so that) the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." He had been before preached to them, but it is the same Jesus that had been spoken of to them; we can't apply it to the Holy Ghost, for it was the Holy Ghost then come down who spoke by Peter, and declared that He should come whom the heavens had then received.

In chapter xvii. 30, 31, the apostle is testifying that though God winked at the times of their ignorance, He "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world (*i.e.* this habitable earth) in righteous-

ness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." The distinctive resurrection of the saints will be at His coming (1 Cor. xv. 23); "But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

Ephesians and Galatians are the only two books in Scripture in which you do not find the coming of the Lord. The Galatians had got off the foundation of faith, absolute justification by faith in Christ, and Paul was obliged to return to the first principles of justification. The Epistle to the Ephesians takes the opposite extreme, and you see the church in Christ in heaven, so that it cannot speak of Christ coming to receive it; it is viewed as now united to Him there. But we shall find constant reference to it in the other epistles; that it is a point kept before the mind for present, practical effect.

Phil. iii. 19-21. "Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Col. iii. 1-4. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

In the Thessalonians it is the main subject of both

epistles. In the first epistle, except the warning in the fifth chapter, it is the blessedness of it to the saints. In the second epistle, the judicial character, though the glory of the saints is included in it, for when He executes judgment on the living we shall appear with Him in glory.

1 Tim. vi. 14. "That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." The apostle exhorts Timothy to go on diligently and faithfully, looking for the *appearing*. When the word of God is speaking of joy to the saints, it is the coming. The moment he speaks of responsibility to the world or to the saints, it is always His appearing. What would have been the use of his saying to Timothy to keep the commandment until His appearing, if it were not practically a present expectation? and then how mighty its power on the conscience: not the very highest motive, but one we need. And if through grace the Lord has delayed His coming, not willing that any should perish, those who have acted on that expectation will have lost no fruit of their fidelity; it will find its recompense in that day.

2 Tim. iv. 8. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Love! do you love, can you love that which will put a stop to everything that is pleasant in the world? it asks the heart. How does this mark a spirit entirely in contrast with that of the world.

Heb. ii. 5, 6. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is

man, that thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that thou visitest him ?" "World to come" is the habitable earth. Christ is now at God's right hand till God puts all things under His feet. Chapter ix. 24: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." There was a state of probation before man was turned out of paradise; since then man has indeed been tried up to the death of Christ, whether law or prophets or the mission of God's Son could win him back, but in vain. What man finds out now is that he is lost; but then, that when man's sin was complete, God's work began, and redemption is by the cross on which man crucified the Lord. Sin was complete then; but He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: that work is completed, and those who through grace believe and have part in it, await the same Saviour to come again for their final deliverance.

James v. 8. "Be ye also patient: stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Here again we see how it is presented as a present motive for patience, and to be looked for in daily life as sustaining the soul in patience, yet as that which was to change the whole state of the world.

In 1 Peter we have a remarkable testimony to the order of God's ways in this respect. First, the prophets, who learned in studying their own prophecies, that what they testified was not to be fulfilled in their day; next, the gospel, but that not the fulfilment. In it the things are *reported* with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. The saints are called on to be sober, and hope to the end for the grace to be *brought*

to them at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen we love. The time of the saints receiving the promise is the appearing of Christ (1 Pet. i. 10-13). In 2 Peter you may remark that he makes the slighting this promise, the calling it in question because the world was going on as it had, to be the sign of the scoffers of the last days.

In 1 John it is mentioned, chapter ii. 23, for the conscience as ground of warning; but in chapter iii. 1-3, we have it amply used for the heart and walk of the saints. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Our blessed and assured hope is to be like Christ Himself. That we shall be when He appears. The present effect of this special hope is that the saint purifies himself even as He is pure, seeks to be as like Him now as possible, takes his part with Himself at His appearing as his motive and standard of walk.

Jude 14. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints." The epistle is striking in this: it shows the decline of the church, the false brethren coming in unawares, who in character designated the state of the professing church in the last days, and the object of the judgment of the Lord when He would appear.

The whole book of Revelation refers to this; it is an account of the preparatory judgment of God on to the 19th chapter, when the Lord comes forth to execute judgment. He has accomplished the work of salvation.

and is sitting at the right hand of God; and then comes to set all things right. This makes His coming, besides the righteous display of His own glory, of God's eternal Son as man the centre of all things, of such importance. It alone actually makes good the plans and counsels of God. Glory is founded on His first coming. That, morally speaking, surpasses all glory. It is the absolute display of what God is, when evil is come in; but at His second coming only the actual result will be made manifest. He comes to receive the church to Himself, the witness of sovereign grace, and to order the world subject to Him in the power of His kingdom in blessing, and so display the government of God. Till He comes neither can take place.

We enjoy the full revelation of Him from whom all that blessing flows, and enjoy it here in a nature suited to it and flowing from it; but we wait for the results for ourselves and for this burdened world. We love His appearing. How is it with you? Are you linked with the world He subverts when He comes, or with Him who brings the fulness of blessing, though with judgment on what hindered it? Were He to come now, would it be your awaited joy and delight? or does it alarm and try your hearts? The Lord give you to answer before His face.

I have sought, this evening, to show you how it forms the constant topic of Scripture, and enters as a present expectation into the whole structure of the habits of thought of those who were taught by the apostles, by the Spirit of God Himself; how its loss was the sign of the church's decline and sinking into worldliness and the world. I leave it to the blessed Spirit of God to

bring this Divine teaching home to all our consciences. To wait truly for Christ, we must have our consciences purged by His first coming, and our hearts fixed on Him that is to come.

LECTURE II.

(EPHESIANS i.)

LAST Wednesday night I mentioned that the two epistles in which the second coming of the Lord is not spoken of, are the Galatians and the Ephesians. It may seem strange that, this being the case, I should have selected on this occasion the chapter we have just read. But I have done so, and shall refer to other passages, with the same intention—desiring to found all I say upon Scripture—because that chapter gives us a general view of the whole scheme and plan that will be fully accomplished at the second coming of our Lord. It does not speak of the fact of Christ's coming, but it does tell of the purpose which God has, and that will then be accomplished. And not only that, but it shows us the way in which the church of God—I mean all true saints gathered to Christ by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven—at the coming of Christ, have a portion or part in it, what their place in this great plan of God is, that plan having necessarily for its centre the exaltation of the Son, "the brightness of God's glory." He was humbled to be exalted.

The way in which God has dealt with us, beloved friends, is this. He has brought us completely to Himself, having respect to the whole value of Christ's work; and in doing that He has given us a place with Christ, makes us like Christ; and having thus made us near to Himself, He then unfolds to us all His plans.

It is not merely being made safe; but, being brought as children to God, "all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." But then having done that, He treats you—as His expression is concerning Abraham, and as Christ's expression is to His disciples—as friends. The Lord says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" And what He then told him was not merely that he personally was in His favour: that He told Him long before. He does not merely show him the promises which belonged to him and his seed. But He told him too what concerned the world, and did not immediately concern himself. That was the special mark of friendship. If I am dealing with a man with whom I am on good terms, but not on terms of friendship, I tell him whatever is needed with regard to the business between us according to the common courtesies of life; and there it ends. But if I have a friend, I tell him what is in my heart. That is what God does with His children: as Christ said to His disciples, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

And there is not a greater proof of the extent to which the church has lost its conscious identity with Christ, than its giving up its expectation of the coming of Christ. And why is that, but because there are so many whose hearts do not enter into this thought, that God has brought them so near to Himself that they are considered as having been taken into His family? "Sons and daughters" the expression is, and sons and daughters too of full age.

That was not their position under the law. Therefore it is said that "the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." And because you have the Spirit, because you have an unction from the Holy One, you know all things, having the consciousness of being sons of God, sons of full age, so as to possess the confidence of the Father. And the same Spirit, which is the Spirit of adoption, unfolds to us all the things which are freely given to us of God. "It is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And there people generally stop; whereas the apostle goes on to say, in order to show the difference between that and our state, "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God."

Now is it not a strange thing that people should quote that passage, which declares that man's heart hath not conceived the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him, and should pass over the declaration which follows, and which contrasts the position of Christians, saying God hath revealed them unto them, and given them the Spirit to enable them

to understand them? And is it not a sorrowful thing, when the Lord hath put us in such a place that He confides to us, poor creatures as we are, in a certain sense, the glory of Christ, having confided to us all His thoughts about Christ, that we should say, "Oh! we cannot pretend to such things as that"? I won't say it is ingratitude—it is worse, it is dishonouring the love God hath shown to us. Suppose a child were to say, "I do not pretend to the confidence of my father; I do not want that, I am simply willing to obey him"; I would say to such an one, "You are a very unhappy child, extremely unhappy, you do not know what a child's place is."

It is just that which the apostle brings out in this chapter. He first speaks, although I do not dwell upon that now (not that it is not precious—I thought while reading, how sweet it was), he speaks in the early part of the chapter of the place in which we are set before God—"that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." You are brought into God's likeness of righteousness and holiness before God—"holy and without blame before him in love." You are brought into the place of sons, having the adoption of children, and you have got the forgiveness of your sins and are accepted in the Beloved Himself.

That is the place you are brought into. There is no other place for a Christian. And now, says the Lord,

having put you there, I am going to tell you what my plan is for Christ's glory and your glory along with Him. He says "wherein"—that is "in the riches of his grace"—"he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times"—He hath not only given us this redemption, so that we know where we are in our relationship to God, but being in this relationship, has shown us all this of His plan—"that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him"—mark where we are connected with it—"in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." We are heirs, as the apostle says to the Romans, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." That is, God says, I am going to give all to Christ, I am to gather together in one all things which are in heaven and on earth in Him; and with Him you are joint-heirs, with Him you have got the inheritance.

That is the way in which the chapter presents to us the purpose and thought of God. Now just look at various passages which show how He brings that about, and the way in which, beloved friends, He will take us to put us into the inheritance. For it is that we are waiting for. We are not waiting to be heirs, but we are waiting for the inheritance. We are not waiting to be sons—we are all the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus; but we are waiting to get what belongs to the sons. Poor earthen vessels that we are here in the wilderness, we are waiting for that. He hath given us

"that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." That is: the glory of His grace we have got, the redemption; but the glory we have not got—that we are waiting for. This is the order of his prayer withal: our calling, our nearness to God; our inheritance, that is, everything of which we are heirs along with Christ; and then there is the power which brings us into it—that is, the very same power which raised Christ from the dead, has raised every believer out of his state of death in sin to the same place with Christ. And, having brought them into one, at the end he shows us the place to which Christ is raised—"at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

This enables us to see a little of the way in which God accomplishes His plan, and it was to show what that plan is that I read this chapter—"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth"—under Christ as the Head. But when Christ takes this place as man—of course as God He is over all always—but when He takes this place as man, we take the inheritance along with Him. We are joint-heirs—"in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." And, again in Romans, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

Now the principle of that is what many Christians are sadly unmindful of, having lost the consciousness of the way in which they have been brought by God into the same place as Christ, who became a man on purpose to bring us into the same place with Himself. "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." If He is a Son, so are we. He is our life, our righteousness, and we share His glory, the fruit of righteousness. When He was transfigured, Moses and Elias appeared in the same glory, talking familiarly with Him. And we should consider that the Lord has come down in lowliness and humiliation amongst us, that our hearts might get near enough to Him to understand that.

Having got the plan then, we shall now go through some passages of Scripture to show how the Lord brings it about. If you will turn to the 2nd Psalm, you will see the way in which the Lord was first presented on earth to have the earthly dominion, and was rejected: the words are quoted in the New Testament, but do not give our portion of the inheritance at all: we shall see immediately how the two things are connected. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed." This is quoted by Peter with reference to Herod and Pilate, etc. "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision"—that is, Christ Himself shall have them in derision—"Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure." That is not come yet. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion"—in spite of all this rejection. "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my

Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." These judgments of course are not come yet. And now, as confirmatory of what I have just said, let me ask you to turn to the book of Revelation, at the end of the 2nd chapter, to show the way in which we are connected with Christ. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." I refer to this now for the purpose of showing that even in such things the saints are connected with Christ—although these of course are not the most blessed things in which they are connected with Him. It is said immediately afterwards, "and I will give him the morning star," Christ Himself, and this is infinitely more precious. But still He associates them with Himself in all His glory. He receives these heathen for His inheritance and breaks them in pieces, and so shall you with Him, if you are faithful.

It is strange to see how the church of God has lost the sense of all things; and I refer to these passages to show how the saints are associated with Christ, even with reference to those extreme cases. "Do ye not know," says Paul to the Corinthians, "that the saints shall judge the world?" He tells them just to think of that, and then to consider whether they were not worthy "to judge the smallest matters," speaking of saints going to law with one another. Are you not able,

any of you, to settle the commonest things between yourselves—" Know ye not that we shall judge angels ?" It was necessary to tell them this, because they had not got hold of a right understanding of the place in which Christ has put the saints, because they did not see their association with Christ in all the fulness of its meaning. I have referred to this association with Christ in judgment, not at all because it is the most blessed part of it, but as confirmatory of what I have said about the association of the saints with Christ.

Observe that the 2nd Psalm speaks of Christ's coming and being rejected. Peter quotes it in that view ; and Paul also the words, " Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." And, being rejected, the Lord, that is Christ, is there represented as laughing—which is of course a figure—at all the raging of the nations, and it is said that the time will come when He will sit in Zion in spite of them all, and have all the world given Him for His inheritance. That, however, does not present Him in the place in which the New Testament largely represents Him. Here He is only connected with the fate of the Jews, and the judgment of the heathen and rebels at the time of the end. At His first coming, He was rejected as Christ, the Messiah, the anointed. And mark what light this throws even upon the gospel. We find Christ charging His disciples strictly that they should no more say He was the Christ, because He was to be rejected, for " the Son of man," He says, " shall suffer many things." It was as if He had said—" I am not now to take my place as King of Zion. I come in another way. I come to be the suffering Son of man, in order that I may afterwards take a far higher place of glory." You find accordingly in Luke and the other

gospels, that He strictly charges His disciples not to say that He was the Christ, because that was really over, in consequence of His being rejected.

Now take the 8th Psalm: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." This, you know, was fulfilled, when He rode upon the ass's colt into Jerusalem. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet." It is here intimated that, though as Christ He was rejected, the consequence of His being rejected was that He takes His place as a Son of man, in which He was to have every thing put under His feet. You will see how the apostle reasons on that in the New Testament.

These two Psalms show His coming among the Jews, and being rejected, and yet His taking His place over these rebels in spite of them at the end. But the present consequence of His rejection is that He takes the place which He always gives Himself in the gospels of being the Son of man.

Coming to the New Testament, you will find this 8th Psalm is quoted in the chapter I have just read from the Ephesians: "hath put all things under his feet"; and, being in that place, "gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." The church is His body, making the complete man, and is

therefore said to be "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Christ is a Divine person, though a man, and filleth all things; but it is the church which makes Him, as the Son of man, complete, makes up what is called the mystical Christ of which He is the head, all the members of the church making up His body. The church, therefore, is as closely associated with Him as a man's own flesh is with himself. This is the comparison employed in the 5th of Ephesians—"No man ever yet hateth his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." And in this body, there being but one spirit, the church is associated with Christ as taking the headship over everything. We see Christ, the Son of man, in the counsels of God set over everything in heaven and on earth; and we, as being close to Him, His redeemed ones, His brethren, joint-heirs and members of His body, are completely identified with Him in His place of headship. You thus see the connection of the church with Christ's glory at His second coming.

You find the same thing in the 2nd of the Hebrews, where the apostle, referring to the 8th Psalm, shows how far it is accomplished. "But one, in a certain place, testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him." That time is not yet come. "But

we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Mark what we have got here. Here is God's purpose of putting everything in subjection under Christ without any exception—there is nothing excepted that is not put under Him. In fact He created it all, and is heir of it all therefore. But the point is this, that what He created as God He takes for an inheritance as man, in order that we might take it with Him; but that time is not come yet. We do not see all things put under Him; but we do see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour; we see that half accomplished, but not the other half, we do not see all things put under Him.

That is what the apostle states, and the reason of it we get in the 110th Psalm, which the apostle also quotes in the Hebrews, and to which the Lord Himself appealed in reasoning with the Pharisees on this very matter. "The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And therefore in the 10th of the Hebrews the apostle says, "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"—that is, the work of their redemption—"from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool," till they are all put under His feet by God. I shall have another opportunity of referring to that. But I am speaking now of the blessed assurance it is to the saints, that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God until, and expecting till, His enemies are made His footstool. They are not made His footstool yet. If they were, He would not allow matters to go on in the world as they do now. It is another thing which

God is doing now. He is gathering out the joint-heirs, and, having that purpose, He says, Sit Thou at my right hand until the time when Thine enemies shall be made Thy footstool. As to the question when that time shall be, "that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the Son." But it is said to the Son—Sit thou at my right hand till that time is revealed.

We have the plan then as clearly set forth as language can put it. We see Jesus, when He had by Himself purged our sins, "set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens," and then, by the gospel, gathering out His joint-heirs. And we are associated with Him, while He is there at the right hand of God, associated with Him as united to Him by the one Spirit.

If you will turn now to another passage, the 15th of 1st Corinthians, you will see the way in which we get this place of glory at the resurrection, all things being under His feet. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming"—those that are His heirs, they, and nobody else. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him." That is, God the Father is not put under Him, but that very exception proves in the strongest way that everything

else is—God the Father being alone excepted. But it is said, we do not see that yet. Do you think that all the oppression and wars and wickedness and horrors which now mark the history of the earth, would go on if everything was now put under Him? It is Satan, and not Christ, who is now the prince and god of this world. It is strange how many people fancy that the cross put an end to that. It was exactly the contrary. The cross was the one grand demonstration—and there never was such a demonstration before—that Satan is the prince and god of this world. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me," said our Saviour. Until Christ had been rejected, Satan was never called the prince of this world. Before that, Jehovah was on the earth, and in the temple was the Shekinah of glory. But when at last He came into this world in the person of Christ, and the world rejected Him, then from that time Satan is the prince of this world. And it is after that, that the apostle says, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." When the Lord comes again He will be the prince of the world, but, till He comes again, Satan is that prince.

If you will now look to the 19th of Luke, you will see how the Lord Himself puts it, when He speaks of going into a far country to get the kingdom, and there receiving it, and then returning and executing the judgments to which He refers. "As they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." They were looking for this, and fancied that, instead of His being rejected as He was, they would get the kingdom with

Him in an earthly way directly. "He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come." That is the service of Christians while the Lord is away. He has gone away to receive the kingdom, and has not returned yet. Then he judged the servants when he came back. "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him;" and begins to take account of their service. And then, that being finished, he says, "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." This is after he has received the kingdom and come back again. He does not judge while he is away. It is said, "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father." But, if He were to begin to judge now, He would have to close the time of grace and the gathering in of the church. The Father judges the saints, but it is in the way of discipline—"If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work." But, as regards definite judgment, it is said in John, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

When the Son returns, He will take notice of His enemies and execute judgment upon them. But meanwhile He has gone away to receive the kingdom, and has not returned. When He does, He will not allow all this wickedness which we now see, to go on. But for the present, this is the time when we must watch

in faithfulness, occupying till He come, and trading properly with those talents, the spiritual gifts He has given us.

You will find this remarkably brought out, if you turn to the first of Colossians. I wish to dwell a little on this, that we may get to as full an understanding as possible of the thoughts and scope and plan of God, which seem to me to be very plainly set forth in Scripture. Begin at the 12th verse, which shows where we, I mean all believers, are: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet"—*hath* made us meet; that is all settled, you will always find that in Scripture; you will not find anything there about growing to be meet; it speaks about growing up to Christ in everything, but that is a different thing. "Which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, . . . who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by him"—this is the reason why He is set over all things—"by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him." He is to take them all under subjection, but not in this state of wickedness in which they are now. "We see not yet all things put under him."

And how does He take them? He takes them as a man—"whom he hath appointed heir of all things" (Heb. i. 2), and we are appointed joint-heirs with Him, as the Scripture tells us. You will see, therefore, how the second part comes in. "And he is before

all things, and by him all things consist"—that is, because He is a Divine Person. "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." He has this double headship, which is also brought together in the chapter of Ephesians I was reading—head over all things, and head to the church. "By him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." "Hath reconciled,"—it is always *hath*, as regards the saints; it is not said "he will reconcile," but "hath reconciled." But the reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth is future, because Satan is not yet bound, and the most corrupt thing in the whole universe is corrupted Christianity.

The apostle says, "By him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," or, as it is in the Ephesians, "to gather together in one all things in Christ;" but he does not say He has done that yet. Nor does he speak at all of those who are under the earth. When he talks of subjection, of everything bowing to Him, it is said, "That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." Of these things he does not say "reconcile" but "bow;" "but you," he says, "hath he reconciled."

You thus see the truth about the double headship of Christ, His being head of the church, and His being head over all things; and then the double reconcilia-

tion, the present reconciliation and redemption of the church through grace, and then the reconciliation of all things in heaven and in earth.

Now we see not yet all things put under Him, but we see Him by faith, sitting at the right hand of God, until His enemies are made His footstool. When that time comes, and they are all put under Him, He will take possession, according to the character given to God in the appellation used by Melchizedek when he came out to bless Abraham, "The most high God, possessor of heaven and earth," and when Christ becomes in all its fulness the King and Priest upon His throne, God will have that title.

We come then to the next thing, which I will just state—although I do not know how far we may be enabled to speak of it here. Taking these two statements, that He is to reconcile everything in heaven and earth, and again, that He is to gather together in one all things both which are in heaven and on earth, we also see in several of the passages which I have quoted, that the church or the saints who compose it are joint-heirs with Him.

What I have been seeking to show you is, that the church of God, all the saints who in this present time God is gathering by His grace in the Gospel, are being associated with Christ, as the centre of blessing; that they get the central place with Himself, under whom all possible existences are to be placed. But the time for this, which the Scripture speaks of, is when Christ receives the kingdom, and returns, when the dispensation of the fulness of times comes. Then everything will be brought into order and blessedness under the authority of Christ. When God the Father has

put everything under His feet, He will bring everything into order, and will then deliver up His kingdom. But the central thing during the dispensation of the fulness of times in the heavenly places will be the church, and the central things in earthly places will be the Jews.

This brings in what are the two great subjects of Holy Scripture, after personal redemption. The church is that in which He displays sovereign grace, bringing its members to share the glory of Christ. The Jews are those in whom He reveals, as a centre, the government of this world. These are the two great subjects in Scripture after personal salvation.

The Scripture speaks of the church of God as those who are associated with Christ, who are the heirs of Christ's glory. But the moment we say that, we cannot but think how wondrous it is that poor wretched creatures like us should be brought into the same glory with Christ, should be brought into the same place with Himself.

And the work of reconciliation is to embrace all things in heaven and on earth. This world is not to remain for ever the sporting-place and play-ground of the devil. That will not be allowed for ever. The Son of David will yet have His place in it, and His glory too as its ruler, and the world will then be altered. "None shall hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." There is a time coming when Christ will be the Prince of peace. He has declared positively that that is not at the present time. "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The

father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother," etc. That is, this is the time when the bringing in the light awakens the passions of men, and until Christ's second coming puts them down they continue their raging. And Christians now have to take up the cross and follow Him. Do you think if Christ was reigning, His followers would only have the cross? Why, they would have the crown. We are positively told that our part is the cross. We must now take it up every day. But when Christ reigns that will not be the part of His people. He will "come to be glorified in his saints," and a glorious place they will get when He comes to reign.

When this time comes, to gather together all things in one, the church of God will be the centre of all things in heavenly places, and the Jews the centre of all things on earth, Christ being the Head over all. That is what we find stated in the chapter of Ephesians which we have read:—"That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come"—the time, namely, of which we are speaking; "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." It is the same power which raises the saints; and so in the next chapter he says, speaking of it now as already got spiritually, "And hath raised

us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus"—God, in setting us over angels and principalities and powers in the world to come, showing the exceeding riches of His grace in the place He has given to us, in His kindness towards us.

This, beloved friends, is what I have been anxious to show you, by bringing before you these various passages, that thus in the ages to come God is going to show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward you. Angels are going to learn the immense riches of God's grace—and how? By our being made partakers of the glory of Christ, in God's kindness to us through Christ Jesus—so that, when they see Mary Magdalene, the thief on the cross, the woman of the city that was a sinner, any one of us, in the same place of glory with Christ, they may admire the exceeding riches of His grace.

Laying hold of this even now by faith, by the teaching of God's Spirit, although we have not got all the fruits of it as yet, we may find our present place very profitable in the way of discipline and exercise and spiritual education; still its full development is in the future, when God's kindness to us shall be shown to the angels.

And now let me try to show you a little, the way in which the Lord brings us into this place of association with Himself. And first I will refer you to the passage in the 17th of John's Gospel, where the Saviour states the fact that the saints share with Him His glory and the love of the Father. A wonderful passage it is, as showing that love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This refers to the present time, or at least to what ought to be the case in the present time. And then He goes on to the time to come. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may [not *believe* but] know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." All the glory Thou hast given me, He says—that is, the glory He takes as a man, for as a Divine Person His glory was eternal—I have given them, and this that the world, when they see my people like me and having the same glory as myself, may *know* that Thou hast sent me. Not *believe;* that is spoken with reference to the present time. Saints should be one now, as a testimony that there is a power in the Spirit of God which overcomes all fleshly differences. Alas that it is not so! This too is a precious subject; but I must pass it over just now, confining myself to the one I am more immediately dealing with Of the present time it is said, "that the world may *believe;*" of the future, "that the world may *know*." "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that the world may *know* that thou hast sent me." They will know it plainly enough for their condemnation, for the condemnation of those who are rebels, when they see those whom they have been accustomed to despise coming with Christ in glory.

Now do you believe this, beloved friends? Our hearts ought to know and recognise that love: not fathom it, for that they cannot do, but confide in it, and to that extent know it, although it passes knowledge. And as you see, the time is coming when the world too will know that love of God to us.

We pass on to the 25th verse: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." That is the present good we enjoy; that the love wherewith Christ is loved should be in us—that we should have it in our souls. No one can fathom it, it passes knowledge; but still we are to have it and to know it, and that by Christ being in us. I am not to wait till the world sees I am with Christ in glory, to know it myself; for the Father now loves me as He has loved Christ.

If you turn again to the 15th of 1st Corinthians, you will see this same truth brought out, in its relation to the resurrection. The point I am now to impress upon you is, that Scripture shows us these two things,—that we are to be like Him, completely like Him, save that He is a Divine person; and that the time we shall be like Him is when we shall be raised from the dead. It is then we shall appear with Him. We are not of the world now; but it is said that the world will only know that we have been loved as Christ was loved, when they see us in the same place of glory with Him, when the Lord takes us up to be with Him and to put us in this glory, so that when He appears to the world, we shall appear along with Him in

the same glory. The fact that it is so, that we shall so appear with Him in the same glory, we have seen already from various passages which I have previously quoted; but I shall refer you to some more particularly. In the 47th verse of the 15th of 1st Corinthians, it is said, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy"—all like to their father Adam: "and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly"—that is like what Christ is, not speaking of His Divinity. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." We shall be like Him, we shall be just the same as Himself. He does not say merely that we shall be there, in heaven, but like Him. But first, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy"—that is, like Adam, poor, wretched, sinners, mortal creatures, like him; whereas, "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." This is the full absolute statement of the fact; then he adds with respect to the fact of the glory,—putting it of course as in the future, not having yet come—"As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,"—and he goes on, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." As it is said before, "it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory."

Now let us refer to some of the passages which show how Christ receives us to Himself. I follow the teaching of Scripture throughout, that we may get solidly grounded in what Christ communicates to us.

He says, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." He has gone into His Father's house, but He will come out again and receive us to Himself, that where He is there we may be also. He was going up then with a body, going up glorious, not as yet having all things under His feet, but crowned with glory and honour; and He says to His disciples—You must wait and occupy till I come again. But now, before He comes, we see what He is to do with us who are in the same glory: "I will come again and receive you unto myself;" as He said in the previous chapter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no *part with* me." It was as if He had said, I cannot stay with you, as King and Messiah now; but I am washing you, that you may be fit to reign with me when I come again. I am therefore still your servant in the sense of intercession and the like; and by my all-prevailing intercession, I will wash you daily; because if you are to have a part with me in my kingdom, you must be made like myself.

In like manner we get what may be called the public announcement of this in the 4th chapter of 1st Thessalonians: "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." See how the apostle constantly expected the coming of the Lord. Some people have boldly dared to say that Paul made a mistake in expecting the coming of the Lord in his day. It is they who are making an awful mistake. It

was never revealed when Christ would come, and Paul did not pretend to know it. But he knew that that time had come when we should be always expecting Him, instead of saying, My Lord delayeth His coming, and beginning therefore to eat and drink with the drunken, and to beat the menservants and the maidservants. It was therefore that Paul put himself in this class, "*We* which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." And what was the effect of that? He lived like a man who expected Christ every day; and when Christ comes, He will get the fruit of that; while those people who put off the expectation of Christ's coming, and do not wait for it, allowing their hearts to go out after covetousness and such-like things, will also get the fruit of their so doing.

The time of the second coming of Christ is declared not to be revealed. Paul got a revelation that he should soon die, and he knew it. Peter also got a revelation that he must shortly put off this tabernacle, and of course knew it. But it was not revealed to them when Christ should come. Therefore Paul, says, "*We* shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed," Christ having overcome death. We may all die before Christ's coming—no one knows the moment of it—still we may use the language, "*We* who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." It is said of the man who thinks Christ is delaying His coming, that he turns to what is bad, smiting his fellow-servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken. And it is said, that while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, the wise virgins as well as the foolish; that is, the church lost its sense of the present expectation of Christ. Even the wise servants had to be waked up

again ; and it was a mercy to them to rouse them up in time, because to His people Christ is ever faithful. But it is the characteristic of the faithful servant that he is expecting. The church of Philadelphia was expecting the coming of Christ, and it is called the word of *His* patience—" Because thou hast kept the word of my patience."

The passage in Thessalonians goes on : " We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first,"—nobody else. I shall dwell upon that at another time, but I just notice it now in passing. The shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, are not to be taken as the voice of God to all the world, to raise the righteous and the wicked. " The shout " is a military term ; whatever the precise term now equivalent to it, it is that which follows " stand at ease." It was first used with reference to calling rowers in the trireme, and afterwards as a military term. When soldiers are left to go about at their ease, and are then all suddenly called back into the ranks, it is the command given them for that purpose to which the word " shout " here used is equivalent. But the only persons who hear it are " the dead in Christ," Christ being represented as in this way gathering together His own troops. " The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

Here then we have the details of it. The Lord hath declared that He will come and receive us unto Himself; and now the apostle, by the revelation given unto him, explains how it will be. He will come and call us to meet the Lord in the air. The passage in 1st Corinthians, which I have already read, refers to the same thing, when it says, "afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." "But every man in his own order, Christ the first-fruits." The specific thing here is, that it is not a resurrection of the dead, but a resurrection *from among* the dead. The raising of Christ was not a resurrection of the dead simply, but a resurrection from among the dead. That was its whole character, a taking up from among the dead; and why? Because the Father's delight was in Him. And why are we in like manner taken up from among the dead? Because His delight is in us. And therefore at the proper time the Lord comes—it is not said *appears*—and calls us up to be for ever with the Lord, to take our place associated with Christ, partaking of that glory which you have already seen referred to in the words, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

What we are called to expect is not to die—we *may* die, and a blessed thing it is too to die—but what we are to look for and expect is, as it is expresseed in the 5th of 2nd Corinthians, "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." That Christ's power over death may be fully shown, He takes to Himself mortal men, whether alive or dead; if alive, He changes them into glory without dying; if they are dead, He raises them. This is the first thing He does; He raises the dead first, and

then the living are changed, and they go to meet the Lord in the air. God hath predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren." And, as we have seen, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them."

This then is our portion of heavenly things. And, if you turn to the 3rd of Colossians, you will see that, when Christ appears, we shall appear in this glory along with Himself and like Him. He has already come and taken us up to Himself, and now He comes manifesting Himself to the world, and we appear with Him. You will remember what I have before quoted, that the glory which was given Him, He has given to us, that the world might know, etc. Now turn to the 3rd of Colossians, and you will see how thoroughly the apostle identifies us with Christ. Look first at the 20th verse of the 2nd chapter, "If ye be dead with Christ." Then, at the beginning of the third chapter, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He is hid in God; He is your life, and our life, therefore, is hid there. "When Christ, who is your life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." When He appears, we shall appear with Him. There can be no separation. If He is hid in God, our life is hid in God. If He appears, we appear. If He appears in glory, we must appear in glory with Him. We are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

You will see the same thing in the 1st Epistle of

John—only the same truth comes out in different shapes—" Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God "—getting Christ's own name. What wonder of love is this, that we should get Christ's own title of relationship! " Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not "—showing that we have got the same place with Him. He says, " I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God ;" I have accomplished your redemption, and the effect of that is, that I have put you in the same place as myself. " I will declare thy name unto my brethren ; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." " Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." It is no wonder that it does not recognise us, if it did not recognise Him. " Beloved, now are we the sons of God "—that is at the present time, " and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is."

Further, as to this appearing with Him, I shall now refer to the book of Revelation, but, before doing that, you may turn for a moment to the 14th of Zechariah, where it is said, " The Lord shall come and all his saints with him, and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." This is referred to by the angel, when, after Christ's ascension from mount Olivet, he said to His disciples, " Why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Again, in the 14th verse of the epistle of Jude, you find, " And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Be-

hold the Lord cometh with myriads of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." Here they are associated with Christ in the executing of judgments. "The Lord cometh with ten thousands"—properly myriads, an immense number, that is—"of his saints, to execute judgment." This shows how entirely we are associated with Christ. And what a place does not that put us in! Yet Scripture is so simple and plain upon the point that it cannot be misinterpreted.

You will find the same truth in the 1st of 2nd Thessalonians. I prefer quoting many passages to enlarging upon them, that our faith may stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The Thessalonians were suffering dreadful persecutions, and the apostle told them, "We glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer; seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." He comes with these ten thousands or myriads of His saints.

You find a distinct statement of their coming given in figure in the Revelation. At the 14th verse of the

17th chapter, it is said, "These shall make war with the Lamb." All the kings of the earth shall be found, not in blessing, joined with Christ, but in open war with the Lamb, joined with the beast. "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Other passages show us that angels will be with Him, but it is not angels that are here spoken of as being with Him. The angels may be described as "faithful" and "chosen," because the Scripture speaks of the "elect" angels; but these that are with Him are the "called," and it is the saints who are "called by the grace of God." These "called" persons then who are with Him are the saints. Having seen who they are, turn now to the 19th chapter: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." You have seen all through that He is coming to judge the wicked on the earth—a thing greatly forgotten,—that there is a judgment of the quick as well as the dead. "As in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine

linen, white and clean "—which, he says elsewhere, is the righteousness of the saints.

I close now, as regards the quotation of passages. Previously we have found, running through the whole series of passages quoted, that the Lord's coming was the one thing kept before the church as its hope in the Scripture, and that it connected itself with every kind of thought and feeling the saints had; that they were even looked upon as being converted, to wait for the Son of God; that every other doctrine of Scripture was connected with it; that what marked a decaying church was the thought that "the Lord delayeth his coming," and that what woke them up was the cry "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." Then again we have found that the Lord reveals to us with wisdom and prudence His plan, namely, "that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth"—reconciling them all in Christ—not merely for their own selfish good, but as a plan for Christ's glory; that with that view He has associated us with Christ in the place He takes as Head over all, so that being associated with Him as heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, we have the inheritance with Him; that, when He takes it, we shall have it with Him; that, when He comes, we shall come with Him; that, whereas He was presented to the earth among the Jews, according to the promise of God, and they would not have Him, He then took another place, that of the Son of man; that place He will take in His resurrection and in His glory, and will raise us up to have it with Him when the time comes—and not we alone, but all saints will have it with Him; that we see not yet all things put under Him, but we do see

Jesus crowned with glory and honour, and are waiting, as He is, till His enemies are made His footstool; that when that time comes (when it will be, nobody knows; God has not revealed it,) the first thing He will do will be to have His body—He is not to be Head without the body, but will catch us up to meet Him in the air; that, if dead, He will raise us; if alive, He will change us, and take us up to meet the Lord in the air; that He will come and take us to His Father's house; that that is our place, and that He will have everything there in order for us—only He must have His heirs with Him; that He cannot take a step in entering on the possession of His inheritance, without having His heirs, His body, His bride with Him. In the Revelation, you first have the marriage of the Lamb, and then you see the Lamb coming out with His armies following Him. They are the bride—that is what they are; for the Lamb must have an associate with Him, a helpmeet to share His inheritance.

He has not yet taken to Himself His great power and reigned. We see not yet all things put under Him. But when He comes, He will take us up to be with Him, because we are perfectly associated with Him. When He appears, we shall appear with Him. When He executes judgment, we shall accompany Him —that is, when He executes judgment on the world, breaking them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel. That is anything but the most blessed part of our sharing His inheritance. The most blessed part is being with Him. But, when He does appear, the world will see us with Him. He comes to raise the dead saints, and change the living, and take them up to be with Himself; then, when He

appears, we shall all appear with Him, and shall "bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthy."

But, meantime, while Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, He hath sent down the Holy Ghost to gather His heirs together. They must now carry the cross: when the kingdom comes they will have the kingdom and the glory. But, until that time, while He is sitting at the right hand of God, His people must bear the cross, and it is only by the power of the Spirit of God that any one will follow Him. Whatever glory He has, in the time of glory He associates us in it with Himself; and, as a consequence, we shall reign with Him, we who are now reconciled in Him. And when He comes again, He comes, not to judgment as regards us. "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation."

And now, beloved friends, I would only ask, With whom are you associated? Are you associated with Christ, rejected by the world, and now sitting at the right hand of God? Are you by the Holy Ghost in spirit associated with Christ? or are you associated with the world which He is coming again to judge, and all His saints with Him? With which are you associated, while Christ is away, having been rejected, and says, Occupy till I come, having gone to receive a kingdom and a glory far better than that from which He was rejected? With whom are you associated? You have to go through the world, you must go through it—do you really believe that Satan is the

prince and god of this world, which has rejected Christ, and do you really live as if you believed this? Do you believe that Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and that He will come again to receive you to Himself, to share with Him the same blessings as Himself in His Father's house, and to witness His Father's glory and share His love? Are we doing anything to recommend Him? Is there that in our hearts which is like the confiding love of a child to his father, that which shows we are sons by adoption? Is there anything in us which identifies us with those who are the heirs of that blessedness and glory? The world knew Him not; the world knows us not. Can we say that? Are we like Him in our place in the world? When Christ was in the world, they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. How is it with us? Is it the things that are not seen, or the things that are seen, that have power in our hearts? Christ is not seen—does He dwell in our hearts by faith, so as to be our portion? If He does, then when He appears, we shall appear with Him in glory; and, better than that, shall be taken up to be for ever with Him.

The Lord give us to be able to wait for Him, and to be ever saying, "Even so come, Lord Jesus." May we have all our treasure and heart and portion associated and identified with Himself. A little while, yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. He only knows how long will last the gathering of the saints to be with Him.

LECTURE III.

(REVELATION xii.)

WHAT I intend speaking of this evening, and the idea of which is given in this chapter in allegorical expressions, is, first, the gathering up of the Church of God, the heavenly saints, to be with Christ and then, secondly, if the time allows, the promises which we have, and thereby the infallible certainty of the restoration of the Jews to their place as a nation upon the earth.

Both connect themselves—otherwise it would be impossible to go into the whole subject this evening—with the manifestation of judgments in this world—only that the taking up of the saints is the taking them out of the way of those judgments; whereas the Jews, who are to remain on the earth, and other Gentiles also, when they come to those judgments, must pass through them, as Lot passed through all that happened to Sodom, making his escape, yet though as by fire; while Abraham looked on upon the judgments that fell on the guilty cities of the plain, and just as Noah was saved, passing through the flood, while Enoch was taken up to heaven.

Those two cases are spoken of as analogous to what shall be at the coming of the Son of man.

We have in these two cases the two things of which I have spoken—the one class of persons out of the reach and out of the way altogether of the judgments that are coming, and the other class passing through

those judgments which destroyed the great body of men, and thus escaping them. I have said that that class consists of the Jews and some Gentiles also ; but I do not enter into details on that point at present—I wish now merely to present the general thought.

We saw last evening that the church forms the centre of the heavenly glory—under Christ, of course, who is the centre of everything—and that the Jews are the centre of the earthly dominion, the earthly blessings. This is what gives their importance to the two points, to which the reader's attention is here directed,—that is, the taking the saints in the last time to be with the Lord Himself in heaven, and their sharing His own glory and blessedness, and then the Jews brought into blessing with this earth, as reigned over by Christ, and not reigning with Him, but still a great nation on the earth. These two facts are the two great centres of God's ways.

In the chapter we have read, you have first Christ Himself and the church, figured in the man-child ; and then in the woman who flees from persecution for 1260 days you have the Jewish remnant, those who are spared in the time of judgment but are not yet brought into glory.

It thus brings before you the two subjects of which I have spoken ; and I add this, that the consideration of the blessing of the church will lead us necessarily to another point, and that is, that what is called a general resurrection, common to all together—and I state it now that we may get fast hold of the idea at once—is a thing entirely unknown to Scripture. I do not deny that it was the notion entertained among the Jews, at least by the Pharisees, that all Jews at all events—as

for the Gentiles they looked upon them as dogs—would rise again together; but our Lord corrected this notion. A right conception on this point is necessarily connected with our understanding the taking up of the church to heaven, because those saints who are dead must be raised for that. When I say "saints," I mean all the saints, those of the Old Testament as well as those under the New Testament dispensation.

I mention another point for those persons who are not familiar with these subjects, and that is, that God now is not dealing with this world—providentially of course He governs all—but that He is not dealing with this world as He afterwards will, at this time while Christ is sitting at His right hand in heaven, and while He is gathering the joint-heirs of Christ to reign with Him when He takes the inheritance. He alone knows at what moment that will be fulfilled. Then, when He hath put Christ's foes under His footstool, Christ will rise up from His Father's throne, and take His own throne. But, while Christ sits on His Father's throne, the Holy Ghost having been sent down consequent on His ascension, He is gathering out of the world a people for His name, to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

This lapse of time, this parenthesis in the ways of God, is brought in, in the most distinct way, at the end of the 9th chapter of Daniel; and I refer to it, because we should never understand God's dealings with mankind, unless we get hold of this. At the end of the 9th of Daniel, you find the Spirit of God showing a certain period which was to elapse before Jerusalem got its full blessing; and you will see the reference that is made to what I was calling the parenthesis

or lapse of time, during which the Jews were all set aside.

At the 24th verse it is said, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." That took place—you know it was forty and six years going on. "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off"—the threescore and two weeks, with the other seven, making sixty-nine,—"but not for himself," or rather, instead of this, take what is in the margin, which is undoubtedly the true sense, "and shall have nothing." He did not take the kingdom at all, He was cut off and got nothing: in heaven He got all the glory, but He got nothing as regards what we are speaking of. "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." That is, what every one almost is familiar with, Titus coming and destroying the city, until there was not left one stone upon another that was not thrown down.

But there is still a week left—we have only had sixty-nine weeks—and here, without entering into detail, is the great principle I want you to get hold

of. We have the sixty-nine weeks, and then there is a lapse. Messiah comes, is rejected, and is cut off, does not get the kingdom at all, gets nothing—He gets the cross, it is true, but that is all He gets. He ascends to heaven, and therefore our hearts must follow Him up to heaven while He is there.

Then comes the time of the end. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." For remark what was said before, "unto the end of the war desolations are determined" as to the time all is left vague, these desolations are to go on for no one knows how long after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Messiah having gone and taken nothing. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations" — that is idolatry, "abominations" means idolatry in the Old Testament—"he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

There then we get this simple but very important fact as to the interpretation of prophecy—that there was a term of seventy weeks, which would come upon the holy city,—upon the Gentiles too, but specially the Jews—until all prophecy was to be accomplished about them; but when the sixty-nine weeks had elapsed, Messiah comes, is cut off—that is actually fulfilled—and takes nothing, and there go on wars, etc., and the city is destroyed; and then there run on the times of the Gentiles, and blindness in part, according to the 11th of the Romans, is happened unto Israel, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. So again our

Saviour, in Luke's Gospel, after speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, says that Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Now that is what is still going on. Jerusalem is still trodden down. Christ has not taken to Him His great power and reign, spoken of in the chapter of the Revelation preceding that which we have read. Jerusalem is still desolate, and the times of the Gentiles are still running on—I doubt not, running close unto their completion, but still running on—and Christ is sitting at the right hand of God the Father, according to that word, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool."

But while He sits there, the Holy Ghost comes down from heaven to declare that, if man had rejected Him, heaven hath accepted Him, and that, redemption having been accomplished and the grace that bringeth salvation, He sits there, to associate with Himself the joint-heirs of whom we have been speaking. But in the meantime the Jews are set aside, and the times of the Gentiles are running on, and nothing is fulfilled, brought to an accomplishment, because what He is doing is gathering the heavenly saints. Now those heavenly saints, as we have seen previously, are completely identified with Christ Himself. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. He is the first-born among many brethren, who are to be conformed to the image of God's Son, and are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." "For," it is said, "no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of his body, of his flesh,

and of his bones." And the saints, too, are the bride of Christ. What Eve was to Adam, that is the place the church of God fills in reference to Christ. And what He is doing now, is gathering the saints to fill this place. It is not the fulfilling of God's dealing with the earth, but with the gathering of God's saints for heaven, and while He is gathering saints for heaven Christ sits at His right hand until His enemies be made His footstool. As the apostle expresses it in the 2nd chapter of the Hebrews, referring to the 8th Psalm, "But now we see not yet all things put under him; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

There is an extremely beautiful thought connected with this, which we cannot dwell on now, and that is, that if you look for the church in the Old Testament you can only find Christ; but when you find the blessedness and glory which belongs to Christ, the church is the sharer of it. So that what we have to see, in connection with the fulfilment of the prophecies of God, is, that previous to that the church is to be taken out of the scene altogether, because He cannot begin these dealings with the Gentiles in the last week, until the gathering of the saints to be heirs with Christ is over. Until He has got the heirs, Christ cannot take the inheritance: and, therefore, all these dealings of God (or of Christ, if you please, who is the power of God), all these dealings of God with the world—we do not speak of His Providence, of course, for not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him—but all the direct dealings of God with the world through the Jews are suspended until the church is taken up.

But you never find in prophecy, until the end of

Revelation,—you never find the church revealed in prophecy, except in connection with Christ.

I may give you some instances of this. For example, I have no doubt that the "man child" spoken of in the chapter that we have been reading includes the church as well as Christ. But it is Christ that is principally meant, for the church would be nothing without Christ; it would be a body without a head. It is Christ who has been caught up; but the church is included, for whenever He begins to act publicly, even as regards Satan being cast down, He must have His body, His bride, with Him; He must have His brethren, His joint-heirs.

If you examine what we find here, you will see that the church is certainly included. You read, "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." The man-child is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, but there is an interruption. And as we have seen that Christ came to this earth, was cut off, and took nothing, we get the other side of the picture here. He takes nothing, but is caught up to God and His throne, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

This sitting at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens belongs personally to Christ; but when it comes to ruling the nations with a rod of iron, the saints are associated with Him. The quotation is from the second Psalm, where it is said, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

That is not asked yet. And He has prayed for the saints, not for the world; "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me." He only intercedes for the world, when He asks for dominion over them, and of course it will be given Him—it is in God's counsels that it will; and He will take judgment in hand, the rod of iron; but then the saints will judge the world too; that is positively revealed, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?"

And not only is this stated in the general, but in the detail, especially as to the rod of iron. At the end of the 2nd chapter of Revelation, you will find that this is given to the church, exactly as it is given to Christ: "He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father." And the same thing is said in the 7th chapter of Daniel, "Until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High,"—the saints who will be in the heavenly places with Christ, when Christ comes—the "rod of iron" being there spoken of as "judgment."

That is not the most blessed part: the blessed part is to be with Him; but it is true, and it is part of what we have to look for. And so in the 20th chapter of Revelation, where this time is spoken of: "And I saw thrones, and the sitters on them, and judgment was given unto them."

How sadly has the sense of this blessedness and glory of the saints been lost—I was speaking of it just

previously—their identification with Christ, their being joint-heirs, members of His body, His bride; the sense of all this has dropped away from the church. It is common to say that it is enough to lie at the foot of the cross. Now to me it is a blessed thing to see a person coming to the foot of the cross; but it is dreadful to stay there, because for a person to do so is the same as saying that he does not own that the whole thing is accomplished. It is a want of boldness "to enter into the holiest, through the veil, that is to say, Christ's flesh." It is the same as saying that he is unfit to pass through the rent veil to be a priest in the holy place. He says, "No; I must stay outside." I say that is a very wretched condition to be in. He must come to the cross in order to get in: that is perfectly true; and it is blessed to see a person who has been careless so coming; he can never get in any other way. But always to stay outside—always to say, "I am staying at the foot of the cross, and do not know whether I have the right to enter in or not," that is a great mistake. If you say you cannot tell whether you are redeemed or not, how then can you call yourself a Christian? Christians are redeemed of course. Why then do you take the name of Christian, and yet remain unable to say whether you are redeemed?

In this chapter of Revelation which we have read, you have it positively revealed that it is finished with the saints, as regards all their trials and all their accusations, before the time that the trial of the Jewish people begins in the last half week of Daniel.

In the first six verses of the chapter, you have the statement of those who are concerned in these last days. First, you have the "woman clothed with the sun, and

the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This, I have no doubt, is the Jewish people, nothing else—because Christ is not born of the church, but, looked at as reigning and glorious in the world, was born of the Jews, "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." There is no kind of sense in the idea of Christ's being born of the church. Being "clothed with the sun" is being clothed with supreme authority She has the moon, all her previous reflected state, under her feet. "And upon her head a crown of twelve stars." twelve is the number always used to indicate power, the power of God's administration among men. You have the twelve apostles sitting on twelve thrones, the city built on twelve foundations, and having twelve gates, etc., the number being used to express administrative power, God's administrative power over man.

Christ then was to be born. "And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." And so the Jews say, in the 9th of Isaiah, "To us a son is born." The church cannot say that at all. We can say that we believe He is the Son of God; but we do not say He is born to us. As concerning the flesh, He was born into Israel.

Then you come to the opposing power—the power of Satan, exercised through the Roman empire. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." That is the power

of Satan resisting Christ, and seeking to put an end to His power. He could not, of course; but he seemed to have done it for awhile. "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron"—clearly Christ: "and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne." He did not take the power — He took nothing, but was caught up to God.

Then, having seen who are the persons engaged, you get the woman's place: "and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." You will see now the reason why I referred to the gap, with regard to all God's dealings with the world, which there always is in prophecy—without, however, giving any dates at all—between the time that Christ is taken up, and the time that the church is taken up, and they are both united together. As I have said, it is not merely a notion of men, but it is positively revealed as God's own order in the 9th of Daniel, that Messiah was to be revealed and cut off and take nothing, that blindness in part happens to Israel till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and that then the Jews would be brought to repentance, as Jesus Christ says in the gospel of Matthew, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Thus we get the church, united with Christ, taken up to God, and the woman fled into the wilderness.

Now we come to the progress of events, not as regards the church at all, but as regards Israel and the world. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon

fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."

The whole power of Satan will then be cast out. That is in direct contrast with the result of the church's warfare. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." This is the conflict we have to wage as to our title to sit in heavenly places with Christ; and the result of this spiritual conflict is, that the power of Satan is cast out. In the prophecy we are considering, this is all over, and you see the joy there is in consequence among the dwellers in heaven, the heavenly saints.

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore, rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea!"

We find here, that while all the heavenly people, that is, the church of God—because our conversation is in heaven and we are one with Christ in heaven—are called upon to rejoice that the accuser of the brethren is cast down—that they have overcome him—at this very moment when these heavenly saints have overcome,

it is just the time when Satan comes down to earth, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time. Thus we get entire rejoicing in what is heavenly, and at the same time, most desperate woe in what is earthly. This makes the contrast very distinct and definite between these heavenly ones and the dwellers on earth, who, all through the Revelation, are contrasted with those persons who are heirs of heaven, whose citizenship is in heaven.

"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." We see here very clearly that by the woman it is not the church of God that is meant, because the church of God is called upon to rejoice on account of all their afflictions being over and the accusations against them past. They are called upon to rejoice because they have overcome the accuser by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony But this woman is in a different position, all the rage of Satan being now directed against her. The church of God has been taken out of the way, and Satan has another object for his great wrath, namely the Jewish people. This is for them the time of great tribulation that is elsewhere spoken of. Christ said to the Jews, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." If they would not take the true Christ, they must have a false Christ.

I have read this chapter of the Revelation, in order

to show that while one class of persons—those associated with Christ—are caught up to God and there is triumph and rejoicing and gladness amongst them when Satan is cast down, that is the very time when tribulation begins on the earth.

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent" There, in the wilderness, in this time of tribulation, God takes care of her. She makes her escape from the tribulation, the figure being employed that she receives this great power of flight, as if the wings of an eagle; and God secures her, not as He did Abraham, who saw the destruction of Sodom from the top of the mount; but as He secured Lot, who was saved by flight. The people in heaven rejoicing are like Abraham on the top of the mount; while the woman upon the earth is, like Lot, saved by God giving her the great wings of an eagle to escape, while all this great rage and power of Satan is being displayed.

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." That is, providential means are to be used for the purpose of saving the Jews from the violent assaults made upon them. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

I shall now refer to a more literal prophecy, which will help us to understand this same interval, these times of the Gentiles, so far as they are going on now—because I have no doubt that they began in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Turn to the 8th of Isaiah, where, after the circumstances of the moment having been spoken of as leading to it, it is said, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself"—a blessed testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus as Jehovah—"and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." The Lord, you know, spoke of His being a stumbling-stone, and said that whoever should fall on that stone should be broken. "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me."

This, you remember, is quoted in the 2nd of Hebrews. Although God is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, Christ says, "I will wait upon the Lord;" or, as the Septuagint has it, "I will put my trust in the Lord." "And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." These are the disciples of Christ in all ages.

And then, in the 9th chapter, you have the close of all that—"For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood;

but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

Here, then, we have the fact of Christ's coming and being a stone of stumbling, and He says, " I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob." Then follows a period of dreadful sorrow for Israel—" They shall look unto the earth ; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish ; and they shall be driven to darkness." And then comes—what ? A dreadful battle ; only it had the fire of God's judgment in it—" this shall be with burning and fuel of fire;" which is a figure of God's judgment. And then it is said, " For unto us a child is born." Christ is this child that was born ; but when He comes back, it shall be said of Him, as in the 53rd of Isaiah, " We did esteem him stricken, smitted of God, and afflicted."

What I refer to the passage now for, is the revelation, it gives of the same fact of Christ's coming and being rejected, His waiting upon the Lord that hides His face from the house of Jacob ; and of the fact that at last He goes forth in glorious power, in this terrible battle of God's judgment—" in righteousness doth he judge and make war." And then it is said, Unto us a Child is born, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, and the like, and He sits upon the throne of David to give peace upon the earth. All this comes after the

time that He had been waiting. His waiting was consequent on His rejection, while God was hiding His face from the house of Jacob, as He is doing now. But that is not for ever. I refer to it, that if possible our souls may get hold of the ways of God, the frame work, as it were, of His plan—that is, that Christ comes, is rejected, and is caught up to God ; and then He sits on His Father's throne, but He does not yet take to Him His great power and reign. Meanwhile the times of the Gentiles are running on, God hath hidden His face from the house of Jacob, and Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And, while that is going on, while there is this parenthesis in God's ways as regards the government of the world, Christ, having sent down the Holy Ghost, is gathering His joint-heirs to be associated with Him when He does take His great power.

Now let us turn to the accomplishment of this, as regards the church, that is, its being taken up to be associated with Christ ; and then, if space permits, we shall turn to the other part, the accomplishment as regards the Jews. My object will be to show that the resurrection of the saints is a thing in nature, time, and character, entirely apart from, and, except in the fact of its being a resurrection, in every particular the opposite of the resurrection of the wicked ; that the resurrection of the saints is a special favour of God,such as was manifested in Christ's own resurrection, because they are saved already, because they have got eternal life, because they are the delight of God, not as they are in themselves, but as they are in Christ ; that they are taken up and dealt with apart by themselves, as not belonging to this world's government, except in so far as

they are kings of it: whereas the wicked, while it is quite true that they are raised—Christ will raise everybody—are raised, however, not because they are the delight of God, but because the contrary is the case; not because they have life in Christ, for they have not; but they are raised for judgment, which is nothing but condemnation. That is another part of the subject, and a very solemn part of it, which I cannot dwell upon now, that the judgment of the nations and of the earth is for condemnation.

I purpose now to go through all the passages which speak of the resurrection, and to show you that the resurrection of the saints is an entirely distinct thing in nature, time, character, and everything else; that it is the consequence of redemption, so that now we can look for it, because we are saved; that it will happen when Christ comes, whereas, when the wicked are raised, Christ will not come at all, but that when He comes He will raise the saints, and the saints only, to be with Him in blessedness and glory.

Mark, beloved friends, how solemn and practical that is for all of us, that the distinction is so clearly made that, where the life of Christ is, where we have a part in the redemption of Christ, when Christ comes He will take us up into glory with Himself, that we who are redeemed and have eternal life shall appear with Him in glory: whereas, where there is not repentance and a receiving of Christ into the heart, that will not be the case; but, when the time comes, those who are in that condition will be raised solely for judgment, and that, while all are to appear before Christ, wherever a person has to do with judgment he is infallibly condemned. Hence you find the words

which are familiar to all of you, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Beloved friends, you can feel how important this is. It applies the subject we are now considering directly to the state of our souls. There is no judgment without condemnation. No man with whom God enters into judgment can be saved, for sentence has been pronounced already as plainly as God can pronounce it, "There is none righteous, no, not one." I do not know what the great white throne can say plainer than that. Such is the declaration which is brought home to our hearts, but, before the day of judgment which shall execute that wrath, the wrath to come, Christ comes to deliver us from it, and wherever He is received into the heart we are delivered from it and are placed with Himself—He is our righteousness, our life, everything.

Before referring to the passages which speak of the resurrection, I will only add in passing that in the very nature of things the judgment of God can never be anything else than condemnation—I speak of the judgment upon men, not the rebel angels, although it is true of them also. We have made a judge of God—and how? By sin. God could not judge Adam, if he remained as God created him; for, if He judged the things that He created, He would be judging Himself. He could not judge him unless he sinned. Suppose I make a desk, and then begin to judge it, I should be judging myself, the workman who made it. God made Adam such as he was, and saw him to be very good; and, while Adam remained such, God could not judge him. What brought him into judgment was that Adam

left God, listened to the devil, and turned to sin. What then can judgment be but condemnation? God may save us out of it through Christ—that is another thing: but our prayer must be, Enter not into judgment with us, for there is none righteous, no, not one.

Now, the resurrection of the saints is the fruit and final power of Christ's deliverance; whereas the other resurrection is the righteous execution of judgment against those who have hardened their necks against God's mercy in Christ, treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

First, then, as to the nature and character of the resurrection of the saints, turn to the 8th of the Romans, at the 11th verse: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you"—that is, if you are Christians, for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His—"He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

That is not true of the wicked. The reasons why they and we, if we are saints, are raised, are totally different; for we are raised in virtue of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us—that is, because we are saved and sealed by the Spirit of God already.

There, then, we get the principle. Now turn to the 5th of John, and see how strongly it brings this out. It says nothing as to time, which is comparatively immaterial; but it is a most solemn and instructive passage with regard to the point we are considering. Christ says, at the 21st verse, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth

no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." They both quicken; but the Father does not judge; all judgment is committed to the Son. "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"—even the wicked themselves, they cannot help doing so. "He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." You see, that after he had said the Father and Son quicken, but judgment is given to the Son, He puts it to us which we are to have: am I to be the subject of this life-giving power with Him? or shall I be the subject of judgment? that is what He is asking us here. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life"—it is given to him—"and shall not come into condemnation"—the same word in the Greek as stands for judgment—"but is passed from death unto life." Christ has exercised His life-giving power, and is not going to deny it by bringing into judgment those upon whom it has been exercised. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live"—by which, no doubt, is meant spiritual quickening. "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"—which is the same word (judgment) again.

I do not want to insist on the word "damnation;" it is damnation no doubt, but I do not insist upon that word, because the point all through is that it is "judgment;" it is a resurrection of life, and a resurrection of judgment. How far they may be apart is another point, which has nothing to do with this fact, that there is a resurrection of life and a resurrection of judgment.

Where there has been spiritual quickening, where they have everlasting life, they shall not come into judgment, but have passed from death unto life; but then, if dead as to their bodies, they must be raised up to make that life complete, because they must have bodies in unison and in harmony with the state into which they enter: and on the other hand, they that have done evil, shall come forth unto the resurrection of judgment.

It is said, "The hour is coming, in the which," etc.; but this is really nothing as to the two things being at the same time. It is no more than if I were to say, "the hour of Napoleon's greatness," meaning the period during which he was great, as contrasted with the period of his fall and littleness. So here, when it is said, "the hour is coming and now is," we know that it has already lasted, since Christ spoke of it, for more than eighteen hundred years. The real intention of the expression is to contrast the time of Christ's life and the time since, with a time still future; it is the same as saying, there is a time for quickening, and a time for judgment, and therefore a time for raising up.

Here, then, are two different characters of Christ's power—His giving life, and His executing judgment: those to whom life is given—gracious, spiritual life—have part in the resurrection of life; those to whom it

is not given, have part in the resurrection of judgment or condemnation.

You thus have the great principle that is involved, and I now turn to other passages which illustrate other parts of the subject.

In the 20th of Luke, the Sadducees put the case that, according to the law of Moses, if a man, having a wife, died without children, his brother should take the wife; and they supposed the case of seven brethren marrying her, and asked whose wife should she be in the resurrection. It was a quibble they raised, tempting the Lord, and Jesus answered them, "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," etc. Now what is the meaning of this, "Accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead"? You see it is accounted a special favour. If you only get the resurrection from the dead, you will be "equal unto the angels." It cannot be meant that, if people are raised to be condemned, they are equal to the angels. But it is said, If you get the resurrection, you will be equal to the angels. "And are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." It is quite impossible that that can be said of those who are raised only to condemnation.

If you turn again to the 15th of 1st Corinthians, you will find that nothing can be more plainly set forth than this is. At the 22nd verse, it is said, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order." Then we get the order of the resurrection, and that is just what we want. Let us see then if it is to be a common thing,

in which all classes are to go up together. "Every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." Nothing can be more plain. "Then cometh the end." There comes another time when others shall be raised, but it is they who are Christ's at His coming.

And what I affirm is, that not merely can this be proved from Scripture, but that there never is the slightest appearance of anything else, that this fact I am speaking about is linked up with the very foundation truths of redemption. Many have redemption who do not see it—I admit that fully—but nevertheless it is the effect of redemption, and you can see the light that is thus thrown upon it by the fact of my not coming into judgment, because I have passed from death unto life, as stated in the 5th of John, and what the Church has lost, by losing sight of that.

Again in the 3rd of Philippians, at the 9th verse, the apostle speaks of it as his own hope, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection,"—that is a present thing, you see—"and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Now what is it to which so much importance is attached, that the apostle desires to be made like Christ, if by any means he may attain something very special, the resurrection of the dead? When the apostle uses such language is it possible that all, both the wicked and the righteous, should be jostled up together in the resurrection, leaving it to be found out

afterwards which are the righteous and which are the wicked? The truth is, it is a new word which the apostle invented, which is not found in classical Greek, to express a being raised up from among the dead, on purpose to distinguish from the raising of the wicked the raising of the saints out from among the dead. I do not like to deal in critical points, but the fact is, that in a number of passages the power is lost, because the word is translated "resurrection of the dead," instead of "resurrection from among the dead." That was the character of Christ's resurrection, when He was declared to be the Son of God with power by being raised from among the dead. And we shall be like Christ in that He will raise us up from among the dead, because we have got the Spirit of Christ, and life from Christ.

The reason why I dwell on this is because it goes right to the root of the question of our redemption.

Nothing can be more absurd—if I may be forgiven for saying so—than the idea of what is called the general judgment—not that we shall not all appear before Christ: that of course is true. Take Paul himself: he has been in heaven one thousand eight hundred years, absent from the body and present with the Lord—are you going to judge him after that? He is in heaven because he was entitled to go there, and to speak of judgment after that is absurd on the face of it. To do so only shows that the Church of God, even true saints, have lost the sense of being redeemed already. If Christ's dying has put away my sins, and given me a place with Himself; if, having received the Holy Ghost, I am joined to the Lord as one spirit, am I, thus joined to Christ, still to be judged? To say so, is to forget the true place which we hold.

I turn now to the proof of this. Look back for a moment to the 15th of 1st Corinthians, where, having got the order, to show further how entirely and distinctly it is saints and none else who are raised, we find; "So also is the resurrection of the dead;—or from the dead. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." How can you apply that to a general resurrection? "Raised in glory;"—can you apply that to the wicked? It is impossible to read one sentence about the resurrection without seeing, not that the others will not be raised, but that it is distinctly and definitely the resurrection of the saints that is spoken of, because they are redeemed and have life in Christ.

Take again the 4th of 1st Thessalonians, which has been quoted previously, with reference to the Lord's coming, and now quote with reference to which we have already seen, that it is "they who are Christ's, at his coming." At the 16th verse it is said, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first"—and no one else.

This is the plain language uniformly held. It is indeed the capital truth of the New Testament, that as Christ by being raised from the dead was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, so we through grace are—not like Christ, in person, but by being adopted—also declared to be the sons of God, by attaining the resurrection, when the time comes, of the body.

The only point that I refer to the Revelation for, is that there will be a thousand years between the two

resurrections. But, whether it be a thousand years or a thousand days, the point which I feel it to be important to insist upon is, that they are totally distinct things; that the resurrection of the saints is God's taking those He delights in, who are already redeemed and quickened by the Spirit, because His Spirit dwells in them, His taking them to be with Christ in glory: whereas the other, whether a thousand days or a thousand years after, is the resurrection to judgment, quite a different thing.

There is one passage more I will refer you to, in order to show how the same truth is everywhere affirmed, the 14th of John. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." That is the way in which Christ takes us up. He will take us up to be with Himself, at His coming. He comes again, and receives us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

There is one passage which people quote to prove the erroneous notion about a general resurrection: they cannot apply to that purpose any of the passages which speak of the resurrection; but they quote the 25th of Matthew, where the division between the sheep and the goats is spoken of. Now there is not a single syllable there about the resurrection. In the 24th chapter, our Lord has been speaking of the dealings with the Jewish people until Christ comes; and then in three parables He describes His dealings with the saints; and then He describes His dealings with the nations, and speaks of the time when He comes in His glory to sit upon the throne of His glory, and to gather all nations—the Gentiles, if you please, for it is the

same word—before Him, to judge them. And this is the judgment, the existence of which people have strangely forgotten—that there is a judgment of the quick as well as of the dead, a judgment of the living —and a terrible judgment it is too.

I now refer to the passage which speaks of the thousand years. I went over the other passage first, because people are apt to think that this "first resurrection" is merely the explanation of some symbolical ideas which we found in the Revelation; but, as I have shown you, there is no passage in Scripture referring to the resurrection which does not show that there is a first resurrection of the saints. Turn, then, now to the 20th of Revelation. But remark that in the preceding chapters you find that Babylon has been destroyed—she in whom "was found the blood of prophets and of saints." Then you have the judgment of the wicked on the earth, which I do not enter into now; and then the marriage of the saints and the Lamb, and their coming with Him when He comes to destroy the beast. "The armies which were in heaven followed him." Whenever Christ comes, His heavenly saints will come along with Him, as it is said, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee;" and, "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," and, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory." Here in Revelation they are seen, in figurative language, coming forth, clothed in white garments, which are the righteousness of saints. I refer to this merely to show the place they hold. Then Christ comes forth as King of kings and Lord of lords, with His saints: and the beast and the false prophet are taken and destroyed. Then Satan is

bound : and then John says, " I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

There we find the saints, those to whom the judgment is given, and not only so, but who execute judgment, sitting on thrones, and reigning with Christ a thousand years. " But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

Mark how the whole statement shows the perfect absurdity—and it is a sad and solemn thing, the influence which this delusion exercises on people's minds—the perfect absurdity of what is called the spiritual millennium. Not that the Holy Ghost will not be there, for He will : but you see now before all this, the marriage of the Lamb is come with the church, the bride of Christ ; the whole as regards the church is complete, and Christ comes forth to execute judgment on the beast and the false prophet, accompanied by the armies of the saints, the bride having made herself ready, and the marriage of the Lamb having taken place, before that. And yet people are looking for the millennium as a state of the church down here ! I admit that it is presented in a figure ; but this is certain, that if the bride is gone up, and the marriage of the Lamb has come, it is not the state of the church down here that is meant. For we read also that Satan is to be bound then, whereas the character given to us while down here

is that we are to overcome Satan. 'Satan will be bruised under your feet shortly." Our place here is that we have to wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places; whereas when the Lamb comes out with His saints, Satan is bound, and then begins the period of a thousand years.

I wish to refer you to the connection of the passage in the 15th of 1st Corinthians with the 25th of Isaiah, because the connection of these two things—the resurrection of the saints, and the restoration of Israel—will thereby be strongly brought out. The apostle says that "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." If you turn to the 25th of Isaiah, you will see that that takes place at this time which we call the millennium; when, the Jews being restored to their place on the earth, there is that era of blessedness among the nations which is commonly called the millennium. It is there said, "Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud: the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low. And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory." That is at the time the resurrection takes place; for it is said in Corinthians, "Then shall come to pass the saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And thus it appears that the time when

this resurrection takes place is the time when the Lord restores Israel, when He establishes Israel's place in Zion, and takes away the vail from off the face of all nations.

It is said, "Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. ii. 13, 14). This is the condition of the earth when this time of which I am speaking comes—"They shall labour in the very fire, and shall weary themselves for very vanity." Again it is said, "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them" (Isa. xxvi. 10, 11). We thus see that, though favour is shown to the wicked they will not learn righteousness; but "when thy judgments are in the earth, then the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

I am adding these few texts to show that the millennium is not spiritual, in the sense in which it is often understood. Whenever God speaks of the earth being full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, and the like, it is always in connection with judgment. You find this in Numbers, when God said He would destroy Israel, that in connection with that it is written, "All the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord;" and you find the same things in the passage from Habakkuk, which I have quoted. You never find the

idea presented of the gospel going forth and bringing all nations under its influence.

In the 11th of the Romans, the apostle puts it in this way: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." That is, he treats that expectation of the church not being cut off, as being wise in their own conceit.

Again, in another passage it is declared that what gathers together to battle the kings of the earth and of the whole world, are three unclean spirits that come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. I do not now go into the details of that: but this must be evident to you, that, when it is stated that these three unclean spirits go forth to gather the earth and the whole world to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, it cannot be the gathering of the saints that is spoken of—it is a gathering of the powers of Satan.

I have now gone through all the passages in the New Testament, which, so far as I am aware, speak of the resurrection; and I think it must be as plain to you as anything could possibly be, that all those passages show very distinctly that the resurrection of the saints is an entirely distinct thing from the resurrection of the wicked, being founded on their redemption and their having received life from Christ, the power of which is shown by the resurrection of their bodies;—that that resurrection of life is definitely distinguished from the resurrection of judgment by a thousand years elapsing between the two;—and that while the first is the fruit

of redemption, the other is the fruit of the rejection of redemption.

Space will not allow me to enter on the subject of the restoration of the Jews. But let me just return, in a few words of application to these solemn truths, that, before judgment comes, Christ has come to save : that, if He enters into judgment, nobody could be saved—that, whenever He enters into judgment, no flesh living can be justified, because there is none righteous, no, not one : but that, because that is true, the Lord has sent a perfect salvation in order that we might escape the judgment, a salvation that delivers us from the wrath to come—that there is wrath coming, but that there is deliverance from it : and that when God interferes in this way to deliver us from that wrath to come, He does not merely save us from wrath, but gives us a place with His own Son—that not merely are our sins forgiven, but that we are united to Christ by the one Spirit, Christ being the firstborn among many brethren, who are the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, so that He nourisheth the church as a man nourisheth and cherisheth his own flesh, and prays, " Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am ;" so that when He appears, we also shall appear with Him, and that if He is the judge, the saints, too, shall sit with Him on thrones, and judgment shall be given to them ; for, says the apostle, " Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world ? "

Now is that the thought, beloved friends, which you have of redemption ? Have your souls believed that this world is a condemned world ? I know that the world will not bear to hear that, but it must bear it

when it rises to judgment, that it is a condemned world. Individual souls are tried, but it is not true that the world is in a state of probation. Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost, and a man that is lost is not in a state of probation. When we are judged, we are judged of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. That is all a settled thing with the world.

How do your hearts take this up, that all this busy scene which you live in the midst of, is a condemned world; that this is the world which said, "This is the heir, come let us kill him"—that this world has rejected Christ, and that Christ has said, "Now is the judgment of this world." He says, "The world seeth me no more;" and "when the Comforter is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." But, because the world is thus condemned, there is offered to us redemption, a new life, a second Adam instead of the first: and all the promises of God are in Him—there are no promises to men, but "all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." When Adam sinned, the promise was not given to Adam—there was no promise given to Adam—it was to the seed of the woman, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. That is, the promise was given to the Second Adam, not to the first.

And, then, in Christ we have not merely forgiveness, but glory. We are one with Christ, the bride of Christ, and have our place, not according to the demerits of the first Adam, but according to the merits of the second Adam. Do you take hold of that blessed truth?

The Lord give you to feel more deeply than you have ever felt before what it is to be in a world which has rejected the Lord; and then to know with joyful hearts that you yourselves have bowed and received Him as your Saviour, who, in unspeakable love, suffered and died for us.

LECTURE IV.

(ROMANS xi.)

OF the two great subjects besides our individual salvation, of which the Scriptures treat, as already stated, namely, the church, and the government of the world, the latter leads us at once to the Jews as its centre, as the church is of the heavenly glory under Christ; under whom, as their Head, all things in heaven and earth are to be gathered together in one. That government will extend over the whole earth, but the royal nation and seat and centre of government will be the Jewish people. To Jerusalem, as the centre alike of worship and government, all nations will flow.

So it was ordained from the beginning, as we learn from the remarkable passage, Deuteronomy xxxii. 8: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance."

The difficulty we have to meet in men's minds on this point is this: that that people having been set aside for their sins—first of idolatry, secondly, the rejection of the Lord Jesus—and the church and kingdom of heaven having been established, it is supposed they will not be restored, but merge in the profession of Christianity. But this sets aside alike the prophecies of the Old and the declarations of the New Testament.

I will refer to this last first, as correcting this very mistake, and this will make way for the direct and positive testimonies of the Old which concern this people of God's election.

In the 11th of Romans this question is treated: "I say then," is the question with which it begins, "hath God cast away his people? God forbid. . . . God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew." Then the case is put of their rejection, and the apostle argues, the casting of them away was the reconciling of the world, and proceeds, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? . . . And if some of the branches were broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree: boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off that I might be graffed in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree;" etc.

Then he warns the Gentile Christians against the very notion to which I refer, assuring them that they

are in danger of being cut off in their turn, as we shall see more fully when we treat that subject.

In the 25th verse, he adds, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery. . . . that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." They are partially set aside till the church be called, and then a Deliverer, Christ, shall, after all the church is brought in, come out of Sion, and turn away their ungodliness. This is not by the gospel as now preached, for he adds, "As touching the gospel, *they are enemies* for your sakes," the Gentiles being thus let in: "but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Here we have God's way towards them clearly set forth. Partial blindness for a time, during which the church, the fulness of the Gentiles, is called: when that is closed, their Deliverer comes out of Sion. Our gospel is not the means, they are as a nation enemies as respects that: *but* they have not ceased to be beloved for the fathers' sakes. That is a matter of God's election, and as to His gifts and dealings He does not change His mind.*

Thus it is certain that God maintains His purpose as to them as a people, and that it is not by the gospel as

*The 31st verse should be translated, "Even so these have now not believed in your mercy, that they might be objects of mercy." The Gentiles clearly were, but the Jews had promises: but having rejected the grace of the gospel they became objects of mere mercy like the Gentiles. This calls forth the apostle's admiration of God's ways.

now preached they will be called in. As to that they are enemies.

So the Lord at the close of Matt. xxiii., when declaring the judgment coming upon them, says their house should be desolate till they say, accomplishing Psalm cxviii., "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." And He carries on their history (chap. xxiv.) till His coming again, *consequent on which* He will gather together the elect among them from the four winds; nor should they cease to subsist as a distinct class till all was fulfilled. Compare Deut. xxxii. 5-20. Then the Lord gives His ways with His servants meanwhile, and afterwards with the Gentile nations when He returns.

Thus we learn distinctly the teaching of the New Testament, of the Lord, and the apostle, as to the plan and ways of God in respect of His ancient and elect people. If we compare Deut. xxxii. 26, 27, and what follows, we shall find this abundantly confirmed. In the end the Lord will judge His people, and repent Himself concerning His servants, and the nations be called to rejoice with them,* and Jehovah will be merciful to *His land and to His people.*

I may now turn to the direct declarations of the prophets, which leave no shadow of doubt on their restoration and blessing, and that as a people, with Jerusalem for the centre of their dominion and glory.

That these prophecies have never been accomplished the passages themselves will prove; but there are certain general considerations which affect this question, which I will here notice.

* The apostle Paul quotes this to prove as a principle that God will bless the Gentiles. But the accomplishment is clearly yet to come; the smallest attention to the passage makes this clear

That Israel as a people were not brought into their promised blessings when Christ first came, is evident. It was the time of their casting away, and the grafting in of the Gentiles, the reconciling the world, and their receiving again is set in contrast with it. Jerusalem was destroyed, not rebuilt; the people scattered, not gathered.

But their restoration after the Babylonish captivity is sometimes alleged to be the fulfilment of these promises: but this was far indeed from accomplishing them. Their blessings are to be under the new covenant: but the new covenant was not established then. They are to be under Messiah: but Messiah was not then. The Jews were still in captivity, so that Nehemiah speaks thus: "Behold we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold we are servants in it: and it yieldeth much increase to the kings which thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."

Further, when Christianity was introduced, not only was Jerusalem destroyed in judgment, but the Gentiles were in full glory and triumph. When the Jews are re-established according to prophecy, they are judged and brought under.

I will now quote the prophecies which predict this establishment of the people. You will see its connection with Christ, with the judgment of the Gentiles, with the new covenant, and even with the resurrection. It will be the sparing of a remnant, in the first instance, which will become a great nation.

I first quote Isaiah, who furnishes us with some very

remarkable prophecies on this subject. After describing the universal evil and the judgment of this nation, he closes his introductory prophecy thus, chap. iv. 2-6: "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."

Thus the glory will be restored to Zion when the Lord shall have purged away her guilt by judgment.

Two causes of judgment are there stated: the unfaithfulness of Israel to her first calling; and their unfitness to meet the glory of the Lord when He appears. On this last (chap. vi.) that judgment which the Lord recalls is pronounced: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed." The prophet then inquires, "How long?" The answer is, "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without

man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." Then it is added, "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they have cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." Nothing could more strikingly depict the long winter of Israel's desolation; but her God would in the remnant give a principle of restoration and blessing, as Paul in Romans xi. This point is more historically prophesied of in chaps. viii. and ix. where the rejection of Christ is definitely spoken of (viii. 14-18), and His manifestation in glory in favour of Israel, yet in judgment (ix. 5-7) *

Chapters xi. and xii., the closing ones of this series, largely declare the restoration of Israel, terminating thus, xii. 6: "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

In chaps. xxiv. and xxv., which form the close of the next series of prophecies, the testimony of God is carried on to the utter desolation of the earth. "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, . . and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again." That is, it is its definite and final judgment as the earth of man's power. It is added, "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. . . . Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall

* The third verse should be read as in the margin, "to him [or it], the people."

reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients, gloriously."

Here, therefore, again we find judgment on the earth, and the Jewish people brought to the enjoyment of Jehovah's presence and blessing.

But there is more than this. In chap. xxv., universal blessing comes on the Gentiles then: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." At this time also it is that the resurrection takes place, verse 8: "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it;" In the mountain of Zion is the awaited blessing and power that sets aside all that is hostile. In chap. xxvi., all is celebrated in a prophetic song. In xxvii., Satan's power is destroyed, and God's dealings with Israel reviewed.

In taking up these closing chapters of the two series of prophecies (v. to xii., and xxiv. to xxvii.), the first, God's dealings with Israel as in the land; the second, with the Gentiles, I have passed over a remarkable chapter in the midst of the Gentile series to which I must now return, chap. xviii., difficult in expression, but very plain in its purpose. Messengers are sent by a mighty protecting power, to a nation scattered and feeble, a nation wonderful from the beginning. The Lord summons all the inhabitants of the world to attend. He holds Himself aloof in His dwelling. The Jews come

back, looking for full national blessing in a carnal way; just as it seemed blooming, they are cut down again, and the beasts of the field, the Gentiles, summer and winter on them. Still at that time a present is brought of this people to the Lord, and then from them to Him in the mount of Zion. We learn thus their return by some political movement, their subsequent desolation in their land; yet they are brought to the Lord, and they themselves bring their offering to Jehovah in Zion.

You will find in chap. xxix., and remarkably in xxxii., and largely in xxxiv. and xxxv., the Spirit's testimony to the final restoration of Israel. You may compare liv., lxii., lxv., and lxvi., for enlarged testimonies of the restoration of Jerusalem in the glory.

The prophecies of Isaiah have the character of a general revelation of the ways of God, having the Jews for their centre, including their guilt in separating from Jehovah, and in rejecting Christ: Babylon their scourge when disowned, and the Assyrian when they were owned.

But Jeremiah lived when the house of David had completed its guilt and Jerusalem was about to be given up to the captivity of Babylon. Hence, while pleading with them as to their sins, he enters into specific detail as to the restoration of the Jews and Jerusalem, announcing, as the other prophets, the judgment of the haughty Gentiles. To his prophecies I will now turn. The whole of the chapters from xxx. to xxxiv. are worthy of your fullest attention. I can only quote the most striking passages.

In xxx., the prophet speaks of that day of Jacob's trouble which there is none like, of which the Lord speaks in Matt. xxiv., but declares he shall be delivered

out of it; a declaration which, as we know, was not accomplished at the first destruction of Jerusalem by Titus; and adds, that in that day the Lord of hosts would break the yoke from off his neck, and strangers should no more serve themselves of him; takes notice of the utter desolation of Jerusalem, but declares He would bring back the captivity, and the city should be built on its own heap, and the palace remain after the manner thereof; and then announces the utter judgment of the wicked when Israel should be His people: it would be in the latter days.

Both families (xxxi.) would be His people. This shows at once it was not the restoration from Babylon merely. It is declared that His love is an everlasting love. Jacob was redeemed (verse 11), they would come and sing in the height of Zion. This is declared (verse 31) to be founded on establishing the new covenant, and the chapter closes with these remarkable words: "Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the

whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever."

In xxxii., Jeremiah is commanded to redeem land at Anathoth; and the chapter closes thus: the Lord declares, He will gather them; and they shall be His people, and He will be their God. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all this good that I have promised them." And, returning to the occasion of the prophecy, "Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that is in Anathoth: for the right of redemption is thine to buy it. So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen sheckels of silver."

The promises are renewed in xxxiii., and God declares, "David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." "If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me. Moreover the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen, he hath even cast them off? thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them."

Nothing can be more positive than these promises. The Lord takes the ground of His unchangeable faithfulness, refers to all the evil Israel have been guilty of, and declares He will not cast them off for it, but put the law in their hearts: gives local details as to the rebuilding of Jerusalem; and says that as He had pulled down and destroyed *them*, He would build *them* up again, so that it is impossible to apply to any others.

We get details as to their restoration, which passing on to Ezekiel leads us to. In the 20th chapter of that

prophet, we are told that, as regards the ten tribes, they will be brought out of the countries ; and as in the days of leaving Egypt the rebels fell in the wilderness, so now they would pass under the rod, like a flock told by the shepherd, and the rebels would not enter into the land (verses 34-38). This is not so with the two tribes, they will return in unbelief, a remnant only being faithful (Daniel's " wise ones ") and two-thirds will be cut off in the land, and the third part pass through the fire, and be refined as silver is refined. (See Zech. xiii. 8, 9).

But I must quote some other passages of Ezekiel. In chapter xxxiv., God judges the shepherds. He there declares He will take the flock under His own care (verses 11-22). He then, in the 23rd verse, passes on in unsymbolical language to say what He will do in the latter days. " And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David and he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them ; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land : and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing ; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them ; but they

shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God, am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God."

In xxxvi., we have the well-known passage in which being born again is declared to be the work which God will accomplish in them, that they may enjoy their land before Him. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen." Then the heathen would know that this restoration was Jehovah's doing. This last point, which we find more than once in Ezekiel, is an important element in the re-establishment of Israel;

and like the others, and especially their occurrence at the same time, has never yet been fulfilled.

In xxxvii., we see a further point insisted on. The dry bones of Israel would be clothed with flesh, and the people brought to life again, and placed (verse 14) in their own land. But when this takes place in the last days, the long-separated ten tribes will be reunited to Judah, and have one head never to be divided again (19, 20). David (the beloved), that is, "Christ," is to be king over them; God's tabernacle will be amongst them; He, Jehovah, will be their God, and they His people; and the heathen will know that Jehovah sanctifies Israel, when His sanctuary is in the midst of them for evermore.

This dwelling of Jehovah in their midst has never been, if not by the presence of Christ whom they rejected, since the Babylonish captivity. Ezekiel wholly passes over the times of the Gentiles, and introduces Jehovah again in their midst in the land.

Connected with this is the account of the inroad of Gog, in the two following chapters. When restored to the land, and appearing outwardly to be restored to blessing, Gog comes up against them; God pleads against him, and sanctifies Himself in this judgment. Gog falls on the mountains of Israel, and God makes His holy name known in the midst of Israel; He allows them no more to pollute His name: and the heathen shall know that He, Jehovah, is the Holy One in Israel. "Behold," it is added in remarkable language, "it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken." The prophecy is closed by these words: "Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into cap-

tivity among the heathen : but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them : for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

Thus the revelation of the full restoration of Israel in both parts of the divided kingdom, reunited in one under Christ and the new covenant, connected with the judgment of the heathen, and their learning that Jehovah is in the midst of Israel, Jerusalem being rebuilt and glorified, as in Isaiah lx., is made as clear as words can well make it. I will confirm this, however, by some remarkable testimonies of the minor prophets.

Turn to Hosea iii. 4, 5 : " For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king ; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." You will remark that the blessing of Jehovah and the often-mentioned David are spoken of in the latter days.

Meanwhile, they have not the true God, and they have not false gods, no sacrifice, but no image either. Thus they abide many days, and thus they have abode. In the latter days it shall be otherwise.

In Joel iii., we have again the judgment of the Gentiles, summoned to awake up and come to the great day of God to the valley of Jehoshaphat (the judgment of God). There, says Jehovah, will I sit to judge all the heathen round about ; and the harvest, separating judgment, and the vintage, judgment of pure vengeance,

arrive. Of the Jews it is said, 20, 21, "But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."

Amos ix. 14, 15. Here we get what has clearly never yet been fulfilled, while it applies to temporal blessings in the land: "They shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith Jehovah thy God." It is here a question, which is not one for faith, whether God's word will be fulfilled.

In Micah we have a beautiful description of what Israel will be in the world in that day under Christ. They will not be added to the church one by one, and lost though blessed in it; they will be gathered as Israel. Chap. v. 3. Then Christ will be their strength against the Assyrian their foe, when owned in the land. Then they become as dew in the world, the freely flowing blessing of God; but as a lion among the beasts of the forest to all that oppose them and the counsels of God in them (verses 7, 8); while all evil is purged out from them and the heathen judged, such as they have never heard, 9-15.

In Zephaniah iii. we have another passage full of instruction as to the Lord's ways with his people. First, Jehovah's long and gracious, but useless, patience (7). So the godly ones had to wait till judgment came: judgments on the nations would subdue them and bring in blessing. In Israel there would be a poor and afflicted and sanctified remnant. (12, 13), but peace should be their portion. Then Zion, Israel, and Jerusalem are called to rejoice with all their heart: Jehovah was in their midst, they would not see evil any more, God would rest in His love—the blessing so great that

His love would be satisfied and in repose. Blessed thought! still more blessedly true of us when Jesus shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Then all that afflict Israel will be undone, and the people made a praise among all people of the earth (14-20).

In Zechariah, the whole of chapter x. describes the restoration of Israel in the latter days, speaking of each division of the people, Judah and Ephraim; then xi. tells of Christ's rejection; and in xii., all the nations gathered against Jerusalem are judged, and she becomes a burdensome stone for them (so that it has no application to past events), and there is a detailed account of how Jehovah will save the people: "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf: and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah." Then there is the mourning over Christ's rejection, and they look on Him whom they pierced. They are sifted, xiii. 9, and two-thirds cut off, and the third part pass through the fire. The last chapter (xiv.) closes this striking history with full details of what shall take place. The Lord comes. His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives. At evening time, when men would expect darkness, it will be light. Living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem. Jehovah shall be king over all the earth; He alone shall be owned. Jerusalem shall be inhabited in her place;

there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

The testimonies I have cited are amply sufficient to show to every one who receives the testimony of God's word as true, the certainty of the restoration of Israel to their own land to be blessed under Christ and the new covenant. The circumstances of the return of Israel and Judah are distinguished. Of the former, the rebels are cut off outside the land, which they never enter; of the latter, in the land: the residue of these last pass through the fire. This involves the history of Antichrist and the Gentiles, which will be spoken of when the prophecies as to them are considered. But Israel and Judah are united under one head. Further, in the series of events which usher in the blessing, the Gentiles are gathered against Israel and are judged; and afterwards blessed in connection with, and subordinate to, that people. Jehovah is king over all the earth. It is noticed, too, that these events take place at the epoch at which the resurrection does. Peace reigns, and the curse is removed; Jerusalem is never defiled any more, nor does Israel lose its blessing.

Such is the establishment of the Divine government of the world at the close. Of this government Israel is the centre, according to the fixed purpose and unchangeable calling of God. They reject now the gospel, but are beloved for the fathers' sakes: they will believe when they see. We have brighter blessings, because we believe without seeing; and this is one thing which renders the understanding of the prophecies as to the Jews important. Not only is it precious to us as a part of Christ's glory, but our clear apprehension of the application of prophecy to them, hinders

our misapplying it to the church. This takes its own heavenly character. It is the witness of sovereign grace, giving it a place with Christ where no promise was; Israel the testimony to God's faithfulness to His promises, Jehovah who was, and is, and is to come. Israel will indeed be the royal people, the centre of Christ's earthly power and dominion; but they will be reigned over. We by pure grace shall reign with Him, suffering first with Him. The church has its place with Him, Israel its own blessing under Him according to His promises of old.

LECTURE V.

(MATTHEW xiii.)

THE part of the subject which will occupy us this evening, beloved friends, in treating of the coming again of our beloved Lord, is the sorrowful side of it. What we had before us in the previous lectures was the blessings and joys of the saints, founded on the sure promise of Christ Himself that He would come again; and we found that their looking for the fulfilment of that promise was connected with their every thought and action. But it is of the greatest importance that we should look at this sorrowful side as well as the other, that man may see the consequence and effect of his responsibility.

The coming of Christ has a double aspect. As regard the professing church, and the world at large too, Scripture speaks of His *appearing;* because then it is that the result of their responsibility is manifested. As regards the body of Christ, it speaks of His *coming*, and our taking up to Himself.

It is one thing to own the church as a responsible body in the world; another thing looking at it as one with Him. When we turn to that which has been set up by God as a system down here, and see the failure of it, it is to be judged in respect of that failure as every system set up by God has been—each having been first established on the footing of man's responsibility. There is never anything else but failure exhibited in man. Look through the Scriptures, where we have man's history from the very beginning of creation, and we

find nothing but failure. Adam most signally failed in what God had entrusted him with; and then when law was given, even before Moses came down from the mount, man had made the golden calf to worship it. So when Aaron and his sons were consecrated, on the eighth day, the first day of their service, they offered strange fire: and, as a consequence, the free and constant entrance of Aaron into the holy place was stopped. Solomon, as son of David, was given glory and riches, by God; but his heart was turned from Him by strange wives, and he fell into idolatry, and the kingdom was divided. God trusts Nebuchadnezzar with power, and he is the head of gold among the Gentiles: he gets into pride, and throws the saints into the fire; loses his reason and senses for seven years (a figure of the Gentile empires), and eats grass like an ox. So with everything. So it is with the church, and man cannot mend it. Grievous wolves, says Paul, will come in after my decease, and there will be a falling away, and then antichrist be fully revealed. The church itself as a system, trusted to man's responsibility, has been all a failure.

All was set up in the first Adam, who has failed. All will be made good in the Second Adam, who is perfect and has overcome. But it is hard to get saints to lay hold of the entirely new position in which all is set by redemption and by the resurrection of Christ. The first Adam failed, and was cast out. The Second Adam, perfect, is come into a better paradise. So of everything. In the same way, law, which man broke, will be written on his heart. Christ will be the true Son of David; Christ will rise to reign over the Gentiles. So, as the church has failed, He will yet be glorified in His

saints, and admired in all them that believe. In each position in which God has tried man what Scripture teaches us is, that man has failed in his responsibility, and that God's plans will go on in His patient mercy till all is fulfilled in Christ.

If we now turn to this responsibility, we shall find there are two subjects before us as engaged in it: the professing church is one; power in the earth, shown in the beasts, is the other. Both are found corrupt, or at open enmity with God; that which is called the church will be utterly rejected of God, spued out.

The thing which Scripture teaches us is not that we shall fill the world with blessing, but entirely the contrary. The evil introduced by Satan where Christianity had been planted, will never be remedied until the harvest. Such a thought is humbling, but gives no ground for discouragement, for Christ is ever faithful. It is the occasion, dear friends, for those who have the grace of God, to walk more in accordance with it. But it is a solemn thing, if what we have to look forward to is the cutting off of the professing church.

Geographically speaking, Christianity was more widely spread in the sixth century than now; the world as then known was more acquainted with the gospel than it is now. Whatever man may say about progress and the like, a great part of what was then the Christian world, and had heard of Christ, is now overrun by Mohammedanism or Popery; and, where that is not so, how far has infidelity and Puseyism prevailed!

But it is this very thing that calls for earnestness in those who have the Spirit of God. He is surely working very specially in these days; and in the tide of evil we have the strongest possible motive for energy and

activity It is always right; but the inroad of evil specially calls for it, as in the days of Noah, in the sense of approaching judgment.

The false idea of converting the world may give a stimulus for a time; but it destroys the solemn sense of what God is, and enfeebles the authority of God's word, which gives no such hope. When it is gradually found, too, that evil is growing up, and that the world is not converted, the reaction tends to subvert faith and cast into infidelity.

The evil which works now was declared from the beginning, will continue its course—such is the declaration of Scripture—till God interferes, and will not be remedied until the harvest. Such is the clear teaching of the parable I have read to you. It is a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. People very often take the kingdom of heaven as if it was the same thing as the church of God; but this is in no way the case, though those who compose the church are in the kingdom. Supposing for a moment that Christ had not been rejected, the kingdom would have been set up on earth. It could not be so, no doubt; but it shows the difference between the kingdom and the church. As it was, the kingdom of God was there in the person of Christ, the king. Only as He was on earth, it was not the kingdom of heaven. But Christ being rejected, He could not take it outwardly then, but ascended on high. Thus the sphere of the rule of Christ is in heaven. The heavens rule, and the kingdom is always the kingdom of heaven, because the king is in heaven; only at the end it will be subdivided, so to speak, into the kingdom of our Father, the heavenly part, and the kingdom of the Son of man, the earthly part. If we understand

the kingdom of heaven as the rule of Christ, when the king is in heaven, it is very simple. If Christ had set up a kingdom when He was with the Jews, it would not have been the kingdom of heaven, because He was not in heaven. Hence it is said, the kingdom of God is among you, but the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The gospel is the only means we have of gathering souls into the kingdom, and such are properly the children of the kingdom; but, within its limits, Satan works and sows tares, and they are in the kingdom. Take Popery, Mohammedanism, all manner of heretics —these are tares which have been sown where the good seed has been. Church means, or is rather, simply an assembly—an idea which has nothing to do with the thought of a kingdom.

The parable I have not read, where we have Christ sowing the good seed, is not a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. A kingdom is a sphere where one rules as king. Christ is simply there sowing the word in men's hearts. It does not describe the kingdom of heaven, nor even the kingdom begun by the king being on earth; it is individual in its character. The moment He comes to this and the two following parables, we have a similitude of the kingdom of heaven. They describe the outward result in this world of the fact of Christ the King being in heaven. You will remark that these are spoken to the multitude, the three last; and the explanation of the tares and wheat to the disciples, showing the mind and purpose of God: what Divine intelligence knows and does: not the mere public result in the world.

The tares and wheat show the outward result, in the world, of the gospel. In the next, it becomes a great

tree : a great tree, in Scripture, signifying great power. That is what Christianity became in the world from a little seed. A great political power, like the kingdoms of the world. The next shows it as a doctrine pervading a mass of measured extent, as a little leaven penetrates through the lump of dough. Then the Lord goes into the house, and explain's *God's mind* about these things,—ver. 36, "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house : and his disciples came unto him saying, declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field." The servants inquire, should they gather the tares up ? They are forbidden to do it. Our part is not judgment or excision in this world. We have not to root evil out of the world by persecution. We have seen often that the wheat was rooted up. They must grow in the field, that is the world, till harvest. "But he said, Nay ; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest." We learn from this, not only that Christianity does not spread everywhere, but that where it does spread it becomes corrupted. And, if we look at the state of Christendom, we cannot but see that this is the case. We see how the tares have been sown and sprung up, how false doctrines have crept in, Popery and all kinds of errors. Then our Lord, having sent the multitude away, and gone into the house, explained the parable to His disciples.

You will now remark that, as I have said, in these parables, with the exception of the first, you have two distinct things—the outward result, and the unfolding of God's design in it. Thus, with regard to the grain of mustard seed, you have the outward result—it

becomes a great tree, which, in Scripture, is simply a great public power. The king of Assyria is represented as a great tree. So Pharaoh is represented as a great tree. And Nebuchadnezzar was a great tree, which was hewn down, but whose stump and roots were left in the earth. In a word, it means simply a great power. And that was what Christianity became in the world—the greatest power in it. The figure in the parable does not raise the question whether it was good or bad, but simply represents that it was a great public power in the world. The little seed of the truth, sown at the first, took root, and grew up to be a great tree. So in the case of the leaven, working within a certain sphere, represented by three measures of meal—it worked there until the whole was leavened. The doctrines of Christianity penetrate through the whole. But no reference is there made to godliness or sanctity —Christianity is represented as a public, outward thing, making its way in the world.

But, having sent the multitude away, the Lord takes up an entirely different thing, and explains, not the outward effect, but God's mind in the transactions represented by these parables. And He begins by explaining the parable of the tares of the field. Verse 34: "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables. . . . Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world." Mark how perfectly absurd it is to think, as some do, that it is the church which is here spoken of. The Son of man comes to sow the gospel,

the word of God, in the world—not in the church. The church has received it already. The church is composed of those who professedly, or really, as the case may be, have already received the good seed. He does not sow it in the church, which would be repeating what had been done before, but in the world; the field is the world, and nothing can be more absurd than to apply this to the church, or to bring it up in connection with any church question. "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one" It is not that the wheat is spoiled. The Lord will gather that and have it in His garner. But the crop is spoiled. Christianity, as an outward thing in the world, has become corrupted, through the prevalence of all kinds of error and wickedness. "The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world;" that is, "of the age." It is not the end of the world in the ordinary sense, that is spoken of, it is "the end of the age;" there is no dispute about that, for any one acquainted with the original: "and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world (of this age). The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." That is, the mischief which Satan hath done will go on, until the Lord executes righteous judgment on the world. The corruption of Christianity, the spoiling of the crop—not of the wheat, because God takes care of that, and gathers it into His garner—but of the crop, the public,

outward thing, which Satan has set himself to corrupt and spoil, will go on until the harvest. And indeed on this point we get a little more precise information. The first thing we learn will be the gathering together of the tares (those who have grown up as the fruit of the corrupt principles sown by Satan where the gospel had been planted) in bundles to be burned. And then He gathers His wheat into His garner, takes His saints to be with Himself. This is all the parable states. The explanation goes further, and gives the manifested result when Jesus shall appear. "Then shall the righteous shine forth,"—they have been gathered already—"then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," as the wicked are cast into a furnace of fire, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

We have first, then, the tares growing till harvest; and then the Lord gathers out of His kingdom all that offend, and them which do iniquity. There is much instruction here; but I will not detain the reader with entering into more than the general idea. We have this, however, very distinctly brought before us, that while the Lord gets His own wheat in the garner, yet the crop sown in the world is spoiled; while men slept, the devil comes and spoils the plan by sowing false principles of Judaism, and legalism, and immorality, or Antinomianism, and false doctrines about Christ. By all these things the crop is spoiled, and that is never mended in the world until judgment comes.

You will now see, by comparing other passages that, the church, having a certain responsibility entrusted to her in the earth, has not fulfilled what that responsi-

bility made incumbent upon her, and comes under judgment. Turn to the 11th of the Romans, and you will see distinctly this principle laid down. As to the facts, we shall refer to other passages. There, after speaking of the cutting off of the Jews, the apostle says: "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. . . . For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." It is exactly through being wise in its own conceit, that the professing church has fallen. It has looked on the Jews as entirely set aside, forgetting that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" that He never changes His mind; that though He can create, and then destroy, He never sets aside His own design and purpose; and that God having called the Jews as a nation, He never will lay aside that purpose. But the church has been wise in their own conceits, thinking that the Jews are set aside, and that the church never can be.

But we shall find exactly fulfilled, as regards the church as an outward thing in the world, what is stated in this chapter, that, if it continue not in God's

goodness, it will be cut off. This is the specific instruction contained in this passage, with reference to those brought in by faith after the natural branches were broken off, that is, Christendom, that they are placed on this ground; that, if they do not continue in God's goodness, they will be cut off like the Jews. The only question is, how long forbearance may be extended to them. "Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off that I might be graffed in." Quite true, the apostle replies, but "because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore. the goodness and severity of God," etc. Now, what I ask is this: Has the professing church continued in God's goodness? Do we not see Popery and Mohammedanism prevalent where Christianity was originally planted? Have they continued then in God's goodness? There is nothing said about being restored. That won't do; what is required is to "continue." It is the same as when a man, who has broken the law, says, "I will do right for the future." That does not meet the law's claims, he has not "continued in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And I ask, Has the church continued in God's goodness? Is that which we now see in Christendom what God set up in His church in the beginning, or anything like it? Has not the professing church turned to ceremonies and sacraments, and all kinds of things other than Christ, in order to be saved by them? They have not continued in God's goodness. You can see that most plainly. Our own consciousness testifies to it. But, if they continue not

in God's goodness, the whole of Christendom, the apostle says, will be cut off, and the Jews will be graffed in again. There cannot be the least doubt of that. "And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in; for God is able to graff them in again." . . . "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." As soon as the Lord has gathered the real church of God, and taken them up to heaven, He sets up the Jews again.

Turn now to the positive testimony. What I have been reading is conditional; it shows what will take place if they continue not in God's goodness. We shall see now if they have continued. You will find that Jude brings it out in a very striking way, because he takes up the whole history of Christianity from beginning to end. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" —that is, the true saints: "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." That is, I would have written in order that ye might be built up in the truth, but through the coming in of evil I am obliged to exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly

men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

We see then the cause of the falling away—that already in Jude's time these men had crept in unawares into the church of God, and were bringing in corruption. And he warns them that the same thing had happened in the case of Israel, when brought out of Egypt, and had caused them to fall in the wilderness—they had not maintained faithfulness. He refers them also to the case of the angels who kept not their first estate, because the principle of apostacy crept in. And mark the way in which he speaks of these men that had crept in unawares, of these tares that Satan had sown. Look at verse 14, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." That is, under the inspiration of the prophetic Spirit of God, he sees the mischief and evil done by these persons, and sees that it was to grow and ripen up to judgment, as we shall soon see appears elsewhere; and he tells the saints that the mischief has begun, and therefore he warns them that they "should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." And the Lord executes judgment, because, instead of the world becoming filled with the blessedness of the gospel, the church has got corrupted. That it is prophesied that the filling the world with blessedness is to be brought about by Israel, and not by the church, you will see, and that very distinctly indeed, when we

come to other passages. But here we get a remarkable prophecy, showing that, as in the 11th of the Romans it was declared that, if they did not continue in God's goodness, they should be cut off, they will not continue in God's goodness; and it gives us the history of the church in the world from the beginning to the end of it, when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment. It is as plain and distinct a declaration as it possibly could be; and you will find that the whole testimony of Scripture concurs, as of course it must concur, in the same truth.

Turn now to other passages, where it is not stated conditionally, or in a general prophetic manner, but where distinct details are given of that which would come about. Turn to 2nd Thessalonians, and you will find there the connected details of the course of that of which Jude has already given us the beginning. But the general fact we also have stated in the Phillippians, where the apostle says, "I have no man like-minded; for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." That surely was an early period in the history of the church, to say that Christians were in a state of such a decline and decay that they were not seeking the things of Jesus Christ, but their own interest. When we turn to 2nd Thessalonians we get this very distinctly brought out: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is,"—not "at hand,"—but "that the day of Christ is *here*." The expression "at hand" makes it almost impossible to get at the sense of the passage; it

means "here," the same word being used as when things "present" are contrasted with things "to come." The whole point of the apostle's statement rests on this, that the Thessalonians thought that the day of the Lord was "here," that it had already come that their having got into so much dreadful tribulation, and persecution proved that it had come. The expression, "The day of the Lord is at hand," is often made use of as occurring in this passage, while in fact there is nothing of the kind in it. The Thessalonians thought, not that it was at hand, but that it had come, and therefore the apostle says, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first"—that is, a not continuing in God's goodness. Therefore, as the apostle had stated that, if they did not continue in God's goodness, they would be cut off, we have here the positive revelation or prophecy that they would not continue in God's goodness, that there would come a falling away, and that the day of the Lord cannot come until that falling away or apostasy takes place. So it is plain on the face of it, that, in place of the church continuing in God's goodness, the directly opposite is the case. The apostle shows how the declension goes on:—"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already

work." That is the important point here, that already, as to its general principles, it was going on in the apostle's days. Even then the enemy was at work, sowing tares. Only it was a "mystery"—it was going on secretly, in a hidden way. There was Judaism, and Antonomianism, making high professions of grace with a corrupt practice, and various other forms of heresy, as the denial that Christ was a real man, etc., all of which are mentioned in Scripture—we do not require to go to church history at all to find them. They denied the humanity, quite as soon as they did the divinity of the Lord.

We find then that this mystery of iniquity was already at work, in the time of the apostle; and it was then only hindered from going on, it was not to be set aside. The time will come when it will be set aside, when Babylon will be destroyed—but not by the word. I may first refer for a moment to this point. In the 17th of Revelation, you find that it is the ten horns of the beast which shall destroy the great whore, and burn her with fire, and then men will be given up to even still greater evils, giving their power to the beast, and then judgment. Returning to the passage in Thessalonians, we find the apostle says, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." We get here this very important truth, as regards the responsibility of the church, that what was working to corrupt it in the time of the apostle himself would go on, until what hindered the full development of iniquity was removed, and then

that wicked would be revealed, etc. That, as I have said, is the very opposite of continuing in God's goodness. It is intimated to us, that what was mysteriously working then would ripen and mature up to the open revelation of the man of sin, whom the Lord will consume and destroy—"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." That is the way in which the professing church will be dealt with. Having refused to retain the truth, the real truth of God, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. "That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The Lord then comes and destroys the wicked, the evil being open and evident; it is no longer a mystery.

This is for us a very solemn view of God's dealings. It is not the pleasant and bright side. The pleasant, bright side is the blessedness the saints will have at the coming of the Lord Jesus, in being gathered together to Him. The apostle says to the saints, You will all be taken up to meet the Lord in the air; and therefore you cannot think that the day of the Lord is here, for that day will not find you here at all. That day is the execution of judgment on ungodly men. It is as if a rebellion were going on at Toronto, and the Queen were to say, I will have all my loyal subjects with me at Montreal first, and then judgment will be executed. And so long as you were not at Montreal, it would be

evident that that day of judgment had not arrived yet. That is the reason why, when it is said, Lo, here, and Lo, there, we know it does not apply to us. To a Jew it is different. If you say to a Jew, who is expecting Christ, Lo, here, or Lo, there, it is a snare to him. But if it is said to us, we can only answer, It is impossible, for we are going up to meet the Lord in the air, not to find Him here; and I am not there yet. So he beseeches them by our gathering together to Him not to be troubled as if the day was come.

In this passage then which I have read, you have the positive declaration, that what had begun in the apostle's time, goes on until Christ comes to execute judgment, and you find another distinct and definite declaration of this kind in the 4th of first Timothy: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron." Then in the 3rd chapter of second Timothy we have very definitely and distinctly stated what the last days will be: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come"—not that the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, that is a blessed time—but that "in the last day perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." That is the character of the last days. There will be a

great form of godliness, much superstitious worship, but a denial of the power of godliness. That is not a continuing in God's goodness, when the professing church in the last days, with a great form of godliness, denies the power thereof.

It is a remarkable proof of the power of Satan, that, in the face of these passages, men, wise in their own conceits, will bring reasoning to prove that they are to go on and fill the whole world with the gospel. That at the very time that judgments are hastening upon them, men will cherish the expectation of the earth being filled with a wide-spread blessedness, is the strongest possible evidence of the power of that delusion of which the apostle speaks. It is not that God is not working, and turning men from darkness to light. It was the same before the destruction of Jerusalem, three thousand were converted in a day If we had three thousand converted in a day now, would it be a proof that the millennium was coming? no, but rather that it was judgment which was coming. It was because the judgment was coming, that that happened. It was the Lord's gathering out His saints before the judgment, and adding to the church such as should be saved. And, if He is now working in a special manner to gather out souls, it is not because the gospel is to fill the world, but because judgment is coming upon the professing churches. The apostle shows that the declension will go on, that it will not be set aside For "evil men and seducers," he says, "shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." And then he gives the resource under such circumstances. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast

learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." —As much as to say, you cannot trust the church, which will have but a form of godliness, denying the power: your resource must be the Holy Scriptures of truth.

You will find again how this mystery of iniquity began to work at the very outset, by turning to the 2nd chapter of the 1st epistle of John, where this very question is treated of. "Little children, it is the last time." It seems a remarkable thing for the apostle to speak of the very time when Christianity commenced to be diffused, as the last time. God's patience has nevertheless continued to go on from that time to this day, for with Him one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. "And as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists." It is not *the* antichrist whom he speak of, but he says that already there were many antichrists, already the mystery of iniquity, the spirit of evil, was working. "Whereby we know that it is the last time." We have seen that the last days are a perilous time, and here we see that the apostle knows it to be the last time, because there are many antichrists. Is it possible then that the last time will be a time when the whole world will be filled with such blessedness as some speak of? The whole testimony of Scripture is as plain as can be to the contrary. "Whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made

manifest that they were not all of us." They adopt false principles, their Christianity becomes corrupted, and they go out.

Turn now to the 18th of Luke (which recurs to, my mind in connection with this, showing how far the professing church is from continuing in God's goodness,) verse 6th: "And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" That is not like having the world full of the gospel. He puts the question, Will there be some individuals still expecting His interference and intervention? but He does not say there will be. The church will be gone, and the question is, Will there be any looking for His interference? will there be any one expecting the Lord to descend on the earth?

It may be well now perhaps to turn to a few passages—because they rest in people's minds, in looking at this subject—about the gospel being preached to all nations, and the like. I believe that this ought to have been done from the beginning by those to whom God hath given grace. But that is not the question. The question is, whether there has not been a failure on the part of the church as to the discharge of its responsibility? It is not a question whether they ought to diffuse the gospel—of course they ought. In the sixth century Christianity was the all-but national religion of China, and there are fragments of it there still. The limits of nominal Christendom are now very much contracted from what they were in former times. Formerly

they embraced all the north of Africa, and in a measure all Asia. Now they are almost confined to Europe, except that in these modern times they include also the scattered populations in America. Let us turn then to the passages which speak of the prevalence of the gospel. That in the 24th of Matthew is one of them. "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then"—not the millennium, but—"shall the end come." There is nothing here about filling the world with blessedness. But the gospel of the kingdom will be preached for a witness to all nations, and then will come the end—the judgment, the end of this age. It is not said that the world is to be filled with blessing. To suppose so is being wise in your own conceits. It is said that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will fill the world; but it is not said that the gospel will, although men, fancying that they have the power to bring it about, speak as if it were the gospel that was to do this.

If you look at the 14th of Revelation, you will find this brought out still more distinctly and clearly, that the end comes when the gospel is sent for a witness to all nations. You often hear the passage quoted, to show that the gospel is to be preached to all nations, which is no doubt a blessed truth in its place, but to see the effect of it, we must take the whole passage, verse 6th "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying, with a loud voice,

Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come." It is almost a miracle how people read Scripture without understanding it. Whoever has been in the habit of frequenting public meetings, and listening to speakers from public platforms, must have heard that passage quoted hundreds of times, as if it meant that the gospel is so to be preached to all nations that it is to fill the whole world with light; while a moment's consideration would show that this preaching of the gospel is a precursor of judgment.

I shall now refer to the passages which speak of the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. But before doing that, let me just quote one passage in Isaiah, in the 26th chapter, where you will see that this is brought about, not by the gospel, but by judgments. Verse 9th: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth" (not the gospel, but judgments), "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Let favour" (that is, grace, or the gospel) "be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness." There must be judgment; the time of harvest must come, as in the parable of the tares. "In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up" (when he is just going to strike), "they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them!"

Turn now to Habakkuk, where you have one of these passages which are constantly in people's minds, as showing that the gospel is to go on and spread until it

fills the world. I refer to them merely for the negative purpose of pointing out that they show nothing of the kind (Hab. ii. 12): "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." The people are all labouring in the fire, and wearying themselves for very vanity, and then the glory comes and fills the earth.

Turn now to Numbers—another of the only three passages in which what I am now referring to is spoken of in that way—and, in the 14th chapter, you will find what the Lord means by filling the earth with His glory. When the people had sinned against the Lord, and murmured against Moses, God said He would destroy them, and Moses then interceded for them: "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." That, of course, is judgment; and the filling of the earth with God's glory here has nothing to do with the gospel. The Lord will have the whole earth full of His glory; but He does not use the

gospel for that purpose. He does send the gospel, and urges it upon men with infinite patience and goodness; but they reject it, and then comes judgment.

In one other passage the expression occurs; you will find it in the 11th of Isaiah: "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." That is, when God smites the earth, and slays the wicked. "And," the prophecy goes on, "in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, from Assyria, and from Egypt," etc. That is, the Lord gathers the Jews, and slays the wicked; and it is then the earth is full of the knowledge of Jehovah. "And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west; they shall spoil them of the east together," and so on—showing that there is to be an execution of judgment in the earth.

Turn now to the 66th of Isaiah, where the glory of the Lord is also spoken of. And, in referring to these passages which are so constantly quoted, it is always an excellent plan to read the context. In this passage

the glory of the Lord is brought in by fire and by sword. Verse 15th, "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many. . . . For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory." The glory of the Lord here comes with the execution of judgment; there is nothing of the gospel at all.

You see then these three points. First, you have the statement that after God had sown the good seed the enemy came and sowed the evil. Then you have the conditional declaration, that the professing church if it did not continue in God's goodness, would, as an outward thing, be cut off. Then, further, you have the declaration that that evil which had begun in the time of the apostles would go one to the end, the Lord only restraining the public manifestation of it until the time of judgment approached at Christ's coming, the fulness of the Gentiles being come in, and then that wicked would be cut off; also, that in the last days perilous times would come, and antichrist would come. We have seen also that the passages referring to the earth being filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, and the like, are all connected with judgment, and then when favour is showed to the wicked, as in the gospel, he will not learn righteousness. If you turn to the Revelation, you will get a little more of detail about the falling away, and about what the character of that evil is which is at work.

But before we quote from the Revelation, let me

remark that the two great characters of evil from the beginning have been corruption and violence. Before the deluge, the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence. And in the Revelation, "Babylon" is the expression of corruption, while the "beast" is the expression of violence. I cannot just here enter into details as to this part of the subject, but I wish to show you how the one runs into the other. In the 17th chapter, the expression, "The great whore," indicates the power of corruption. At the 15th verse, it is said, "The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The reference here is to the influence over the nations which a corrupt Christianity has exercised. "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Of course that is not the gospel; it is violence putting an end to corruption. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast." It is not when Babylon is destroyed that the kingdom is given to the Son of man. It is given then to the beast. The effect of the destruction of all this corrupt influence of outward, nominal Christianity, of the awful corruption of the Papal system, which was the centre of it all, that "mother of abominations of the earth," —the effect of the destruction of that, through the hatred and disgust of those connected with it, and disgusted and wearied with it, will be to put the power of the world into the hands of the beast. There is nothing at all here about the gospel. It is the violence of man refusing longer to submit to priestly power.

When one reads Scripture simply desiring to learn what it teaches, he cannot but be surprised how people form from it the systems they do. They take hold of some abstract principle, and, following it out, succeed in finding it in Scripture according to their expectations. In studying the Scriptures, they settle first what the Scriptures should teach, instead of being content to take simply what they do actually state.

Turn now to the 16th chapter, and you will find more about the time when judgment shall be executed upon Babylon, although we cannot now enter into the various details of it. "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." These are the powers of evil. "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief." It is the devil who gathers the whole world to that great battle. People may discuss what is meant by the dragon and the beast and the false prophet. I have very little doubt on that point, and I may just say, without entering into details, that the dragon is the power of Satan, that the beast is the Roman empire, and that the false prophet is the false Messiah at the time of the end. I do not dwell upon this, but at all events it is perfectly clear that the three unclean spirits which gather the nations to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, are not the gospel. It is the battle which in Isaiah is said to be with burning and fuel of fire. The nations are gathered to Arma-

geddon, and then comes the judgment. The beast and its horns destroy Babylon, that great corrupt system; and then the beast and the kings of the earth are gathered by evil spirits against the power of Christ, Satan being cast down from heaven. In the 19th chapter of Revelation, we read that there comes forth on the white horse He who has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords; that the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies are gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army; "and the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse." Thus we get here very distinctly that there is an execution of judgment. And after that, after the execution of judgment, Satan is bound. Then we have a passage which is the only ground we have for saying that there is to be a millennium—a thousand years of blessedness.

We have seen the general statements that the world will be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, but that is to be by judgment. But the only proof we have that the period of blessedness is to last a thousand years, the only evidence for this particular character of the glory which is coming, is found in the 20th chapter of Revelation. We have plenty of testimony that there will be a time of blessedness; but this specific character of it is only found here, and that is after the

Lord has come as King of kings and Lord of lords, and executed judgment, and Satan is bound. Satan has been corrupting everything; but when he is bound, he can no longer do so; and then come the thousand years, and thrones and judgments are given to us. The saints shall judge the world, for so God hath revealed in His word. Are there not many professing Christians who, if you were to say to them, "Don't you know you are to judge angels?" would think you were mad? And yet it was to the Corinthians, who were very far from being the most perfect of Christians, who were indeed going on very badly, that this was said. The full import of the connection of the church with Christ has been almost wholly forgotten. People talk of their hopes of being saved, and of living godly; but the connection of the church with the Second Adam is practically forgotten. The power of redemption, and the high privileges connected with it, are overlooked.

Let us revert for a moment to the 17th of Revelation, to see how intimately the saints are associated with Christ in that day. We read that the beast and the kings of the earth shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; "and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." That description does not apply to angels. No doubt He will come with the holy angels; but the expression, "called, and chosen, and faithful," applies to the saints who come "arrayed in fine linen white and clean," which "is the righteousness of saints." So arrayed, they come with the Lord. We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and when He appears we also shall appear with Him in glory.

There is another point I wish to show you, although I cannot go into details. I can only touch upon the great principle bearing on the subject we are considering, and pass over them very rapidly. You will remember a passage of sacred history, in the time of Elijah, recorded in the Kings. God had seen that there were seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal, although Elijah had fancied that he only was left, and they sought his life to take it away. Acting under God's authority, Elijah raised the question whether Baal was God, or Jehovah was God, and proceeded to test it by a public demonstration in the face of all the people. And he proposed to test it in this way, that he who answered by fire should be acknowledged as God. Sacrifices accordingly were prepared, and the priests of Baal cried aloud from morning until noon, "O Baal, hear us!" And Elijah mocked them, and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened." And they cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives until evening; but there was no answer; And then Elijah built an altar, and laid on it the sacrifice; and filled the trench about it with water, and called upon the Lord; and the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

Now we find in the Revelation, that the false prophet brings down fire from heaven in the sight of men. It is all lies of course; but he does it in such a way as to deceive men. The very thing which Elijah did to

prove that Jehovah was the true God, the false prophet or false Messiah also appears to do—bringing down in the sight of men the very thing which proved Jehovah to be God; and that he succeeds by it in deceiving men shows that they are given up to strong delusion to believe a lie. This refers to the government of the world, so far as the Jews are concerned. If you turn to 2nd Thessalonians, you will see the same where Christianity is concerned, in connection with the apostacy: "Then shall that Wicked be revealed . . . even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." Of course they are all "lying;" but still they are "powers and signs and wonders,"—words verbally identical in the original with those used by Peter when he preached of "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs." That is, antichrist does the same things, lying of course, but the same as regards men's apprehension of them, which proved Jesus to be the Christ, and the same things that proved Jehovah to be the true God. By these means he blinds and deceives the people, and leads them away to worship the dragon and the beast. He does this by bringing fire down from heaven, and leads them to recognise the false Christ as the true one, by doing the same things—falsely of course—as Christ had done. You cannot conceive a more awful and solemn thing, than that men should thus be given up to strong delusion to believe a lie, and to be subject to the power of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders; and it is not surprising that the apostle should be so impressive in his warning, when he says, "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come."

Now, beloved friends, the more you search the Scriptures the more you will find these great leading principles clearly brought out. But the professing church refuses to see them; and this is connected with what I pointed out at the outset, that everything which in God's great scheme is trusted to man is a failure. It was while men slept, that the enemy came and sowed the tares; and then we have the positive revelation that the church, not continuing in God's goodness, will be cut off. Therefore the notion that the outward church of God, after having become corrupt, will again be set right, is an entire delusion. I say outward church of God; for, as regards individuals, what is revealed on this point is only a reason for greater faithfulness on their part. That is another question altogether. As regards the duty of individuals, Scripture gives plenty of directions about that, even when speaking of the last days, when there shall be a form of godliness and a denial of the power thereof. From such, says the Spirit, turn away. It will be with the saints as with Elijah; there never will be a time when individually they will have a greater consciousness of the power of Christ, than in the time of general declension. That, however, is not the point; the question is as to the outward manifestation and outward effect in the world. Men have comforted themselves with the thought of an invisible church, forgetting that it is said, "Ye are the light of the world." Of what value is an invisible light? It is said, "Let your light so shine before men," that is, let your profession of Christianity be so distinct, "that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

And now, beloved friends, take this lesson with you that, during this time of God's forbearance, until He comes forth to execute judgment, a deep responsibility is laid upon each of us. Let each man take heed how and what he believes. Keep in mind that it is by false doctrines that Satan has corrupted the church—by Judaism, by the worship of saints, and by all sorts of errors. We have not time to enumerate them all; but it is by the introduction of these false and heretical doctrines that Satan has succeeded in corrupting Christianity, so much so that if you wished to look for really the darkest characters of evil, you would have to go among Christians to find them—of course, Christians merely in name, I mean; but yet those who boast that theirs is the only true Christianity in the world.

I only add now this thought: How important it is, if we are approaching these scenes of judgment, that we should understand correctly what is the destiny of the church, instead of imagining that all is to go on rightly until the whole world is filled with blessedness. How important it is that we should understand that this mystery of iniquity, already at work in the apostle's days, is to go on until God leaves the bridle loose, as it were, for the whole power of evil to do its worst; that the evil is working until the saints are taken up to meet the Lord in the air, and then the final power of Satan will begin to work. This surely is a solemn thought for me, if I care for the church, how I have discharged my own responsibility, when the question is put, as in Jeremiah, "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? what wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" Read the

Acts, and see what Christendom is now, and say what likeness there is. Ask not only, Is there the doctrine? but, where is the practice now? Yet the Lord is faithful; and, when judgment comes, the Lord having bought the field, has got the treasure safe, and He has kept it safe all the while.

We shall afterwards take up that part of our subject which connects God's dealings with the world, more particularly with the Jews. But meanwhile the Lord give us to lay this to heart—the difference between what is called the church, the outward thing, and what the church really ought to be; and let us see what our own characters are, if there is anything in us which is an adequate fruit of the travail of the Son of God, and of the coming down of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter and Sanctifier. It is best always, in making application of these truths, to begin with ourselves. Let us see then, whether in our hearts we love and care for Christ and about the condition in which the church of God is, or whether we are deceiving ourselves by imagining that it is in a proper condition to set the world right. I do not doubt that the Holy Ghost is remarkably working now, From the first time these things broke in upon my mind, I have always expected that the Spirit of God would work; and I bless God that He is doing so much at this time. Yet I feel assured, from what I find in the Scriptures, that it is by judgment that this working is to be followed.

LECTURE VI.

(DANIEL ii. 19 TO END.)

I HAVE read this chapter, dear reader, because it gives an outline of a part of prophecy of which other parts of Scripture are the detail.

We began with the church's having a sure and certain hope, through the never-changing promise of God, of being caught up to be for ever with Christ before He comes to judge the world, and we saw that the looking and longing, where the heart is truly for Christ, for His coming again, is the bright and cheering influence of the Christian's path.

Previously we have seen the professing church looked at as in the world, that which is called the church to be at last utterly rejected of God, fearfully judged for its corruption, or spued out of Christ's mouth as nauseous When we turn to the ways of God on the earth, we have seen that His direct government had always been exercised with the Jews as a centre. Providential government He always exercises. He makes all things work together for good to them that love Him. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him who is our Father. But when we come to direct government, the immediate dealings with men on the earth according to their conduct, and the direct public interference of God to show His ways on earth, then the Jews come on the scene, and are the pivot round which those ways turn. But they extend necessarily, when fully displayed, to the Gentiles who surround them, and fill the earth, the great body of whom have now long oppressed them.

Hence the same passages which refer to the Jews refer to the Gentiles also, as those who come up before God when He begins that government in which the Jews have the first and principal place on earth. These passages I will now refer to, some of which, by reason of what I have just noticed, have already been quoted in reference to the Jews.

But before doing so, I must point out two classes of Gentiles to which they refer, in respect of whom there are two very distinct classes of prophecy in Scripture: that which refers to those who were enemies of the Jews when God was there with them on the earth, when He owned them, or will hereafter again own them as His people; and that which refers to those who oppress them when they are not, when God has written on them Lo-ammi, not my people, and the times of the Gentiles have begun. These are entirely distinct. We get certain powers dealt with which are outside Israel, and are their enemies when the presence of God and His throne are still in the midst of that people, and the representatives of whom will be found in the latter days, when God has taken Israel up again. But after the Jews turned to idolatry, and, whatever had been God's patience, rising up early and sending His prophets till there was no remedy, He was obliged to give them up to judgment; He then set up Nebuchadnezzar, and the times of the Gentiles began, and they are still running on. The empire passed from Babylon to Persia, and Persia to Greece, and the Jews were slaves to the Romans when Christ came, slaves to the Gentiles. The ecclesiastical polity was allowed to exist, but the civil power was in the hands of their oppressors. These times of the Gentiles run on until Christ executes judg-

ment, until those who were the oppressors of God's people when He does not own them, shall be destroyed, and those who are their enemies outside these oppressors shall be brought to nought at a time when they think they have got all their own way, and then the Jew is set free. In a word, Scripture shows us that the Jews are the centre of God's earthly dealings; and that as regards the Gentiles there are two classes of prophecy, one referring to the enemies of God's people when He owns them, and the other to their oppressors when they are turned off and He does not own them.

The 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy lays the prophetic ground, at the very origin of their whole history, of all that is to come to pass. In the 8th verse, as we have seen when speaking of the Jews, they are shown to be the centre of His ways. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people (peoples) according to the number of the children of Israel." Just connect it now with the general judgment of the Gentiles. The prophet first states that after his decease Israel would corrupt themselves, then he goes on, in verse 21, to the wickedness, the fruit of which is going on now. In the 25th verse he rises above the wickedness so as not to destroy them, to show that He is God. Then he goes on to the time of His rising up to judgment, leading us to that of which we are speaking. When Israel is brought utterly low He will indeed judge His people, but He will also repent Himself concerning His servants. His hand, as it is expressed, takes hold on judgment, rendering vengeance to His enemies, for such the Gentile powers are found to be, and apostate Jews too. He makes His arrows drunk

with blood, and His sword devours flesh. Yet this it is which brings in the millennial blessings, when the nations will rejoice with His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants, a thing not yet accomplished, will render vengeance to His adversaries, and, mark the expression, be merciful to His *land* and to His people.—Thus we have His people judged, His servants avenged, His adversaries brought under vengeance, yet His land and people Israel coming into mercy, and the Gentiles rejoicing with them. In a word, judgment, the Lord's adversaries destroyed, Gentiles and apostate Jews, His servants avenged, Israel restored, and the nations blessed with them, but Israel His people.

I will now turn, before distinguishing the enemies of Israel owned of God, and their oppressors when given up, to the general testimony of the judgment of the nations, and then show you the two distinct. Turn to the last chapter of Isaiah, lxvi., 15th verse: "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh." We have the great general fact of the judgment of the nations; and if you turn to verses 6 to 14 you will see the Jews set up again. "For thus saith the Lord (verse 12), Behold, I will extend peace to her (Jerusalem) like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." Then you get the ungodly Jews in the 17th and thence to the 24th, the manifestation of Jehovah's glory those that escape the judgment that accompanies it going off to the nations and announcing the appearing of that glory, and bringing back the scattered Jews to Jerusalem. I get, then, thus the great fact that the Lord comes to

judge all flesh, and those He finds interfering with Israel He cuts off.

Now turn to the 9th and 10th Psalms, they celebrate the judgment and destruction of the enemies of Israel in the land. The psalmist introduces the whole subject in the 4th and 5th verses: "For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever." "That I may show forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God. (x. 16) The Lord is king for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land." These are the two Psalms which, after speaking of the rejection of Christ as king in Zion, and His taking the character of universal headship as Son of man in Psalm viii., bring in the whole testimony of the Psalms, the state and feelings of the remnant of Israel in the last days, and the judgment which God executes upon the Gentiles. Hence, remark, it is that we find in the Psalms these appeals to judgment and demands for it, which have often stumbled Christians, when urged by the enemies of Christianity. They are not the expression of Christian feelings. We leave the world and go to heaven. In no sense have we to demand the destruction of our enemies in order to pass into glory. But Israel cannot have their rest on earth until the wicked are destroyed

and therefore they do demand this righteous judgment, and that is the way they will be delivered.

To pursue our subject: turn to the 25th of Jeremiah. This is a remarkable chapter; but first I will give you a few verses from the end of the xxiv. of Isaiah verse 16, but to show the connection with Israel I will read from the 13th verse, "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly." There you get the world reeling like a drunkard, under the terrible judgment of God, and (verses 21, 22) we see the judgment of the powers of evil on high, the prince of the power of the air and his angels, and of the kings of the earth on the earth; and then the Lord reigning in Zion and before His ancients gloriously.

Now turn to Jeremiah xxv. 15, "For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me: Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it." He speaks of the various nations in that way, and then goes on from the 29th to the 33rd verses to declare the universal judgment of the heathen, describing the terrible coming down of Jehovah in judgment upon them.

Turn now to the 5th chapter of Micah: "And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard." But then, too, Israel is blessed and re-established in power in verses 7 and 8, and that through Christ, great to the end of the earth (verses 4, 5): "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God: and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Asyrians shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men."

Turn to Joel iii. 9-17: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: (Jehoshaphat means judgment of Jehovah) for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is

ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord shall be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." What makes this passage additionally important is, that Jerusalem is brought back to blessing, and never to be trodden down again; no strangers shall pass through her any more, but the Gentiles who helped on her affliction are destroyed for ever. In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem was in trouble, and again when Titus besieged and took it, the Gentiles were not destroyed at all; when Cyrus sent back a remnant to Jerusalem, they remained captive; and strangers are yet in Jerusalem.

Again we find all the nations gathered together, the Gentiles destroyed, and the Jews set up, Zephaniah iii. 3, to end; Jehovah's determination is to gather all the nations. They are to be devoured by the fire of His jealousy; here again, too, we find that Israel will never be cast out again. He will bring back their captivity and make them the praise among all the people. He will cast out their enemy, they will not see evil any more. Jehovah is in the midst of Jerusalem, God will rest in His love.

I will turn to one more passage, before I show the

difference between the two classes of enemies to Israel. Haggai ii. 5-9: "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house (properly, the latter glory of this house), shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." The apostle quotes this passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, showing that it has not yet come: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." He is urging them not to rest on earthly and created things, showing that that time of universal shaking of the first and changeable creation was yet to come, declaring that all would be shaken and pass away.

Let us now take a review of Scripture, as to the two classes of Israel's enemies of which I have spoken. The chief enemy of Israel, while Israel was still owned of God, before the captivity of Babylon, was the Assyrian. There had been others—as Syria—but Syria succumbed to the Assyrian. Egypt then sought to fill the scene of the world, and came up, conquered Judæa, and met the power of Babylon at Carchemish; but its power was broken, and Nebuchadnezzar became

the head of gold over the whole earth, and the times of the Gentiles began, which are still running on, and will till the Lord takes His great power and reigns. No doubt the Jews came back, or a small remnant of them, from Babylon, to present Messiah to them. But they were so wicked and perversely idolatrous that God had given them up to captivity; and even when in their land, on their return, they were subject to the Gentiles, God's glory and His throne were no longer amongst them. When they came back they never got the schechinah, —the shechinah, was the cloud that manifested the presence of God. They had no longer the ark, or the Urim and Thummim. What constituted the witness of God's presence was gone, and these things were never restored. *These* are the times of the Gentiles still; the four beasts constituted the times of the Gentiles. And this, as to the earth, was of the last possible importance. The throne of God ceased to be on the earth. Prophecy, indeed, remained till the outward order was restored, but it is remarkable that the post-captivity prophets never set aside the judgment pronounced in Hosea: "Ye are not my people." They never call the Jews God's people in their then standing, doing so only when they prophecy of that future day when they will be restored to the Divine favour, which is yet to come. Finally, when Christ came He was rejected, and has now sat down on His Father's throne, and the Divine power and glory is wholly above,—the object of faith to the believing soul. The people whom God had called, and had God's throne among them, were wholly cut off, though preserved. Well, the throne of God had ceased on the earth at the beginning of these times of the Gentiles; and, therefore, in

Daniel you never get the God of the earth, but the God of heaven, because He was not there with them.

This departure of God from the direct government of the earth with Israel for the centre, His throne being in their midst, sitting between the cherubim, as it is said, and His return to the government of the earth is of immense importance. In Ezekiel we see this judgment on Jerusalem. God comes (Nebuchadnezzar being the instrument), God comes on the cherubim in the way of Providence, those wheels which were so high they were dreadful, spares His own whom He has marked, and gives up the rest to destruction. He executes judgment, leaves them, and goes into heaven. The Gentiles are left to rule (subject to God's providence and final judgment) Israel, and God's throne in their midst is set aside. Four great empires arise successively—Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Roman empire, while devastating everywhere, does not succeed in getting all nations under its power, but continues the great power of the world till the judgment, though in a special form. Then the Assyrian comes on the scene again at the close, that is, geographically what is now Turkey in Asia, and part of Persia; but in the last days Assyria will appear on the scene in the Russian power, according to the testimony of Ezekiel xxxvii., xxxviii. (a passage applied to this power near two hundred years ago, by the elder Lowth, before the present question arose), and the world as connected with Israel and God's ultimate purposes on the earth, is divided into Western Europe, and the basin of the Mediterranean, the Roman empire, and Eastern Europe, or the Russian; these two are never confounded in Scrip-

ture. The Assyrian was the power that warred against Israel when God owned them, and the other the power that oppressed and held them captive when they were not owned.

Now in Isaiah and the pre-captivity prophets you get the Assyrian all through, the beast being scarcely mentioned: once is the King to complete the scene, and even that, I apprehend, is a subordinate ally of the beast. Whereas in Daniel you don't get the Assyrian, unless possibly obscurely in one chapter, and then not as such, the same thing being true of Zechariah, save that all nations are mentioned in both in a general way, as brought as sheaves to the floor when rising up against Jerusalem.

Thus far I have been speaking of the general judgment; now, having distinguished between the beasts and the Assyrian power of the latter day, we have to cite those passages which apply to them distinctively. Turn to Daniel, you get fully the beasts, but not the Assyrian; let us examine first the chapter I read. Here we have Nebuchadnezzar the head of gold, the Persian empire denoted by silver, the Grecian by brass, the Roman by iron, while the iron and clay represent the present state of things. Then after these last were formed, a stone is cut out without hands, God's sovereign work, smites the image, all becomes as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and no place is found for them; and then the stone which smote the image became a great mountain which filled the whole earth. There is not here, remark, a trace of influence exercised over the previous component parts of the image so as to produce a change of character. The notion is that Christianity will spread and pervade these countries.

Now the stone does not grow at all till they are entirely destroyed. There is no influence exercised, no modification takes place, no change at all is spoken of here. The little stone destroys all before it increases. It is the stone which has smitten the image which grows. What we have got here is the coming of Christ's kingdom in judgment, and a total destruction of the empires which preceded its action; that action was on the last, and more particularly on the toes of iron and clay, the last form which this image took, looked at in its geographical distribution on earth, and the condition of its parts, partly strong, partly broken. What gives its specific character to the figure is, that the stone does not grow at all until it has done all these things; and *after* it has finished its work of judgment and destruction, grows to be a great mountain.

What is going on now is not this. Christ has ascended up on high, and He waits, in the spirit of grace, sitting on the right hand of His Father's throne, while the saints, His co-Heirs, the church, is gathering out of the world, until the moment known to God alone, He rises up from the Father's throne, then to take to Him His great power and reign, His enemies being now put under His feet. Turn now to the interpretation itself, which is perfectly clear on this point. Power in the world is entrusted to man in the person of Nebuchadnezzar; three empires succeed his, and at the end, though there be a strength in the last, which breaks in pieces and subdues all around it, yet a conflict of principles characterises its latter form (I have little doubt the Teutonic and Latin elements), and it is partly strong and partly broken; but then the close comes, verse 44: "And in the days of these kings shall the

God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom, shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

LECTURE VII.

(DANIEL vii.)

YOU will remember, dear reader, that in the preceding pages we have seen the general outline of God's dealings with the Gentiles; in connection with His chosen earthly people the Jews; the Jews being the centre of all God's earthly dealings. First, that at the restoration of the Jews there would be the judgment of the Gentiles, the nations being divided into two classes: those that were enemies to God's people when God owned them and had His throne in their midst; and those who led them captive and oppressed them when God did not own them. Both will be cast out from the seat of power.

It is evident that as regards the world it is an all important fact, God's taking His throne from it. When that took place He was no longer the God of the earth, though He overrules all things providentially, but does not exercise direct government as in Israel when His throne was there. Hence Daniel calls Him the God of heaven, and it is not until He comes to judge the world that He takes His name of God of the earth, Lord of the whole earth (see Zech. xiv.). The time during which God gives up His throne on the earth is called the times of the Gentiles. During these times the Jews who were taken captive and made slaves to Nebuchadnezzar have ceased to be God's people as a present position, and are always subject to the Gentiles, and the times of the Gentiles run on till He comes to take vengeance. Then He takes them up again, casting out, as we saw before, those who oppressed them when they

were not owned, and those who were enemies when they were owned and His throne was in their midst. The distinction of these two classes is important to us, because we are in the times of the Gentiles. In the prophecies there is never the slightest confusion between the two. The Assyrian, and finally Gog, is the great enemy of Israel when the people is owned; the four beasts, or Gentile empires, their oppressors when they are not. The prophets up to the captivity, and Ezekiel, speak of the former; Daniel and Zechariah of the latter; to which, when we come to the New Testament, we must add Revelation. The whole New Testament history is under the last beast.

The first and fullest, most general account of these is in the 7th chapter of Daniel, which we have read. If we turn to it now for a moment, we shall see that it is divided into two portions by the term, "I saw in the night visions." First, we have, verse 1-6, the fact of the four great empires, and a brief account of three. The next division, beginning with the 7th to the 12th, a particular description of the fourth beast, and then a throne set up, and judgment—verse 13 beginning another division in which the kingdom is given to the Son of man after this we have the explanation given to Daniel by the angel, in which the condition of the saints under the beasts, and particularly the last beast, and finally, under the Son of man, is given. They are beasts as having lost their intelligence towards God, not owning Him, and doing their own will in ravening power as far as they can. Of this the madness of Nebuchadnezzar was a figure. The first three great empires are Babylon (the head of gold); the bear, Persia (silver); the leopard, Greece (brass). On these I do not dwell, they are past.

The fourth beast, described as we have seen apart more particularly, is the Roman; you find him represented as fierce and powerful, tearing and devouring; not simple conquest, but putting all down under it, treading down what it did not devour: and where has not Western Europe sought to place its power? But which is far more important still, we find direct antagonism to God. (Ver. 7, 8.) "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it: and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." You will remark that there is a special power here (a horn the symbol of power or a kingdom); before it three of the kingdoms fall. Its general character is given here. We shall see the details further on. It has eyes of man: eyes here mean intelligence, insight into things. His mouth speaks great things, saying, Who is Lord over us? Nor is this all, that his lips are his own, as the psalm speaks, but he will not allow of God. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down (here, with the LXX. and best judges we must read, set, which falls in with the sense, indeed, of the whole passage), and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thou-

sand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

The first three powers, you may remark, had their dominion taken away, their power was destroyed, but subsisted afterwards as subject kingdoms; whereas when the Roman Empire is put an end to, it is destroyed utterly. To this we must now turn. It has an importance which none of the others have, though Babylon has a special character. It was the Roman empire that was in power when Christ was born, and took part in His rejection through Pilate, and hereafter they will join antichrist when he comes. The prophet regards till the thrones are set and the Ancient of days sits. The Roman empire will then subsist, and whatever its form or its apparent subversion, is not supplanted by any other beast till the judgment comes. The prophet beholds till the thrones are set. and the Ancient of days sits. This is an important element in the fourth beast's history; the consequence is, it is utterly destroyed when it ceases to be an empire. Remark, too, the clear proof we have of what I drew your attention to as so important in speaking of chap. ii., namely, that the kingdom is not assumed by the Son of man till the judgment is executed. He may and will destroy the beast by His power; but it is only when it is destroyed, His own judgment is established. It cannot be along with evil. This is the question of the expectant and suffering Jew in Psalm xciv. 22. It is not now, but after the judgment, that the growth of Christ's

kingdom takes place. He is sitting at the right hand of God, but comes thence to take the kingdom with glory and power; He is gathering in now the joint heirs.

Next we find here that what is brought out as the cause of this judgment is the great words of blasphemy of the little horn. There cannot be a more definite statement that the glory and kingdom of Christ is consequent on the judgment. I insist upon this, because it bears upon everything we are treating of, and determines our whole view of the nature of Christ's kingdom. There is no change in the principle of sin in the first Adam; but it goes on to the end. It was lawless at the beginning, breaking law when law was given; rose up against the Lord in hatred to God, when He was made flesh and dwelt among us; and Satan having throughout corrupted the church, as we have seen, his power is allowed to unfold itself in the beasts, and in the last beast ripens to a head, and leads the kings of this earth to make war with the Lamb; the lawless one, the man of sin, being then openly revealed Our portion, as we have seen, is in the Lord, nor will the fruitful power of His grace towards us cease till we shall be like Himself. But though the kings of the earth stand up together, and the rulers take counsel together, yet God will set His King upon His holy hill of Zion. Here, however the aspect of His power is somewhat different; He is seen as Son of man, a term of wider dominion than Son of David, in which the 2nd Psalm views Him, but even there the heathen are given to Him for an inheritance, and He breaks them in pieces like a potter's vessel. The difference is this, that here the kingdom is given and possessed as a dominion, in the 2nd Psalm established by judicial power.

We now come to the interpretation in which this very judgment is spoken of, some immensely important truths besides being brought out. In the prophecy nothing had been said of the saints, heavenly or earthly. Here we shall find both. I do not say the church, but still heavenly saints. Indeed, when God's mind is thus given, and not merely the outward facts, the connection of these events with the saints is the principal point. (17th verse): "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." The saints will do it, not only the Son of man. (21st verse): "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

Here you will first remark the extremely important point, that the Ancient of days Himself comes. For though Christ, as man, is gone to receive a kingdom and to return; yet the Son of man is the Ancient of days. So it is said in Timothy, that the King of kings and the Lord of lords would show Christ in glory. But in the Revelation, Christ comes as King of kings and Lord of lords, and I may add, in another relationship, the traits of the Ancient of days in Daniel are found in the Son of man who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks. He is there distinctly both—Son over His own house, who built all things.

Another term calls for remark here. The saints of the Most High, or, as in the margin, heavenly places, which we find again in Ephesians, as the place of the

saints—yet it is immediately connected with the name God takes as possessor of heaven and earth. It is not here the church, but all the saints who have their dwelling in heavenly places in connection with the kingdom, yet in a state of eternal glory. God took the name of God Almighty in relationship with Abraham, of Jehovah with Israel, of Father, in grace, with us. Thus Abraham was to be perfect, walking before God Almighty; Israel was to be perfect with Jehovah their God. We are called to be perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. We are before God as Christ, but, as He is in us, we are called to display the Divine nature, to be imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ loved us. But the name of Most High is the expression of God's sovereign dominion above all that is called God, the supreme. So when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings, a figure of Israel's deliverance and final victory in the latter day, Melchizedek, the figure of Christ as King and Priest, Priest upon His throne in the world to come, King of righteousness, King of peace, comes forward and blesses Abraham on the part of the Most High God, *possessor of heaven and earth*, and blesses the Most High in Abraham's name. In our chapter, the saints have their name in connection with this, and indeed it is applied to God with the difference then of being singular instead of plural. The saints of the high places shall take the kingdom. Meanwhile, tribulation and trial is the portion of those on earth. The little blasphemous horn, who speaks such great things, makes war with the saints. This is the general character. Of course they must be down here. Those on high he can only blaspheme. I do not believe this little horn to be

antichrist; the source of persecution is ever the traditional religious power. Antichrist will be in direct association with him and urges him to it. Of this hereafter. But this is the last active power of evil in the Roman empire, or beast, whose names of blasphemy are on it. Of this also further. This persecution will continue till God's power interferes. This is stated in a very important verse, he prevailed till the Ancient of days came (here we see that the Son of man is the Ancient of days, for we know that the Son of man comes), and thus a total change takes place, judgment is given to the saints of the high places, and the time is come that the saints possess the kingdom. He does not say saints of the Most High here, for on earth and in blessing the earthly saints will possess the kingdom, as in Matthew xxv., but judgment is given only to the saints of the Most High. The Ancient of days then comes, judgment is given to the heavenly saints (compare Rev. xx. 4, where we read judgment was given unto them, and they live and reign with Christ a thousand years), and the saints possess the kingdom. When will Christians learn their place? He is never called our King, but He is the King of the nations of the world. We reign *with* Him. Nothing is so hard as to get the saints to accept the place they have in Christ; to *know* that in Him, through the price of His own most precious blood, they are one *with* Him in God's sight and purpose now; and after having been caught up *to* Him in the clouds, as we have already seen in a previous lecture, will come *with* Him when He comes to judge the nations.

But I pursue the explanation. 24th verse: "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that

shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings, and he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." Most High, the first time it is mentioned here, is God Himself; times and laws refer to Jews entirely, the words are terms which refer to their statutes and ordinances. These, not the saints, are given into his hands, God never gives His saints into their enemies' hands, though He may use these as a rod. When that time comes, the beast at first makes his covenant with Israel, according to Daniel ix. 27, first joins with them, then breaks with them, and makes the sacrifice and oblation to cease. All the Jewish order which had been set up in pride will be completely upset, as in Isaiah xviii.: "They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains and to the beasts of the earth; and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them." They are brought into such trouble as never was since there was a nation, no, nor ever will be. It is the time, times, and half a time, the great tribulation. The verse gives in few words, but precisely, the state of things when the little horn is wearing out the saints of God.* Satan will be cast out of heaven, and have come down, as we have seen, in great rage, having but a short time.

Before that period every thing is given into the

*The saints of the Most High here, I do not doubt, are specially those spoken of in the last part of Revelation xx. 4, who, refusing to worship the beast, will, being killed, have their place on high.

power of the beast. Then the Lord, the Ancient of days, who is come, takes all into His hand. A short work will the Lord make upon the earth, for the judgment shall sit; the kingdom shall be given to the *people* of the saints of the Most High, that is, to the Jewish people, now brought into connection with the rule of heaven, and secured by it. In order to get that clear a little, we turn to the Revelation, for there we find the history of this beast unfolded in the thirteenth chapter. I shall refer to it fully further, here only to notice its character and what it is. It is the Roman beast with seven heads and ten horns. It receives its power from the dragon, blasphemes God and those in heaven, and makes war with the saints. It is ministered to spiritually by the deceitful power of Satan. It is the instrument of Satan's power in the earth, when he is cast out of heaven. Already, as the dragon, the Romans had joined in rejecting Christ. The Roman beast is the only one who has done it in the person of Pilate. But then Christ owned the power as of God, as it was. He said, "Thou hadst had no power, if it had not been given thee from above," though Satan's influence, as prince of this world, was guiding the use of that power. Then judgment was on one side, perfect righteousness on the other. When Christ comes again, judgment will turn to righteousness. They will be reconciled in one, as it is in Psalm xciv., "The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it." Till then the saints must not expect it. God may hold the reigns and control to His own purposes the powers that be, whom He hath ordained, may give thus all quietness, as we surely

experience it and have to thank Him for ; but we must not expect the motives of government to be righteousness, as God sees it. It is the time to do well, suffer for it, and take it patiently, as Jesus did ; and when God looses the reins to evil—when Satan is come to the earth—then the full true, character of evil power from Satan will be manifested. "The dragon gave him his throne, and power, and much authority." Such is the Roman beast in its final state during the time, times, and half a time.

The distinct and definite place and character of this period becomes as plain as possible if we consult the end of the ninth of Daniel. The prophet receives from the heavenly messenger the assurance that the Jews will be restored. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and ten weeks : the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing," as in margin. "Not for Himself," is not the sense. "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week : and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." First, seven weeks, during which time Jerusalem is rebuilt ; then sixty-two weeks—making sixty nine weeks. Messiah was cut off, but there was a week, or part of one, left. After the close of the sixty-ninth week, Messiah was cut off, and He took nothing. Thereupon the Jewish nation instead of being restored was completely subverted. We find in Luke, "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations : and

Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." The last week thus remains. In the first half, indeed, Messiah was there, but rejected by the nation, and owned only by the remnant. At the end antichrist is owned by the nation, rejected by the remnant. The beast makes a covenant with the Jews for that week, but breaks it in the midst of the week, the half week remains unaccomplished. You get then three and a half years that remain to be accomplished, when abominations, *i. e.* idolatry, will overspread the Jewish people, the times and laws will be changed; at that very time Satan is come down in the 12th chapter of Revelation, and the woman, the true remnant in Jerusalem, flees into the wilderness for a time, times, and half a time. This is Daniel's half-week. You get it thus perfectly clear. The remnant owned Christ, but the Jews did not. You get the sixty-nine weeks, and then a long parenthesis, in which Christ is set aside, and the Jews on the earth, "desolations being determined," which goes on until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled. During this period the church, the heavenly thing, is called.

Thus the time we are in is not reckoned at all; so the prophets, who do not speak of the times of the Gentiles, as Daniel does, pass it over altogether, and connect Christ's second coming to earth with His first. We have a very remarkable proof of this from the Lord Himself, when quoting from Isaiah lxi.—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the ac-

ceptable year of the Lord." The prophet adds, And the day of vengeance of our God." This Christ does not read, though in the same sentence, but stops short in the midst of the sentence, when He had read as far as, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and then ceased: "He closed the book and sat down;" because the remaining part of the prophecy extended beyond the period in which they then were. and in which we still are, to a time which is yet to come—the time of vengeance of the Lord. All this time the interval in the midst of Daniel's week runs on without being counted. We don't count time in heaven, and this is the time of the heavenly calling. This is evident from the passage in Daniel ix., for the weeks go on to sixty-nine, then all is vgaue to the one week at the end; but as soon as ever God takes the Jews up again, Daniel's week begins again. If you apply, therefore, the time, times, and half a time, or the forty-two months, or the twelve hundred and sixty days (which are precisely the same time, three hundred and sixty days being counted to a year, and the five intercalary days or epigomena being left out), to the intervening epoch, you are necessarily on false ground. I believe there is an analogy, as there are many antichrists, though they are not *the* antichrist, proving in a moral sense we have been in the last days since the apostle's time. But the moment you come to the precise, it all falls to the ground, although there is an analogy. The counting of time belongs entirely to the Jews, and the three years and a half begins to run when they are again on the scene, when Satan has been cast down and the beast has assumed a diabolical character, is come up out of the abyss.

If you take the 13th chapter of Revelation, you get the details of this beast—2nd verse,—"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." There I get the direct authority of Satan. The saints of the Most High did not take the kingdom then: we shall be caught up and be entirely out of the way of that power of evil. 3rd verse: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." I do not doubt that we get here the imperial head, once destroyed but now revived. 4th verse: "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" That is, the direct power of Satan, as dominant, is publicly owned; and the Roman imperial beast, thus restored, carries all the world enthusiastically after it. Verses 5, 6: "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Mark here, he can't touch them in heaven, but he blasphemes them: Satan had been cast out, he was no longer an accuser, and those above he can only blaspheme. There will be some who will have a place in heaven, and whose hearts are weaned from earth, whom he will injure. Those whom he can hurt and kill will be taken up, or they would have lost earthly blessing by their faithfulness, and not

get heavenly ones. Such there will be, who refuse to worship him. But this is a detail into which I do not enter here, as our subject is the Gentile powers and their judgment. But (8th verse), "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain;" for such I have no doubt is the true force of the passage. Complete power, only God preserves a remnant, is in the hands of Satan and his instruments.

But connected with this we have now another power coming out of the earth: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon." In this I have no doubt we have the antichrist, or false Messiah, the direct exercise of Satan's falsehood on earth. He is not a priest nor anti-priest here. That he exercised in heaven. He is a false prophet, compare xix. 20, and he has two horns like a lamb. Horns are the power of a kingdom, and he sets up to have that like the Lamb; he pretends to the power of Messiah's kingdom and to be the hoped-for king, but when his voice was heard it was evidently Satan's. Antichrist denies the Father and the Son, *i.e.* Christianity; he openly denies its truths, and he denies that Jesus is the Christ, the first, so to speak, Jewish form of Christianity, though ever of course true, but what a Jew was and will be called on to own. 12th and 13th verses: "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men."

How solemn this as the power of delusion, remark. It was the proof Elijah gave that Jehovah was the true God, not Baal. Here this active power of Satan is showing by the same sign that his witness is to be received, and that they are to own the beast and worship him, and they are so given up that they do believe the lie. We have seen elsewhere that he did falsely what Christ did to prove His mission. He leads them thus further to open denial of Christ, denies Christianity altogether, and says he is Christ *himself*, but at the same time leads them by these means into idolatry and to make an image to the restored beast (ver. 14—16), "and he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give," not "life," none can do that but God, but breath "unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:" that is, he forces them to be his avowed slaves, and make an open profession of his service. In sum, we have a second beast, using diabolical spiritual energy, and playing into the hands of the first beast, who held his throne from Satan. You get a kind of trinity of evil and resurrection. The dragon gives the throne to the beast as the Father to Christ, and the second beast exercises in spiritual energy the power of the first beast, in his presence as the Holy Ghost with Christ. This

is the fruit of the falling away, the apostasy of Christianity So the first beast was slain and his deadly wound is healed.

In the 17th chapter we have other aspects of the beast or Gentile power. The empire is given, but it will ascend out of the bottomless pit, become definitely diabolical, and go into perdition. Ver. 9-11: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings," forms of power; "five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." That is, five forms of government were fallen in the apostle's time, and one was the imperial; a seventh was to come, and abide a short time; and the last, who is of the seven, as a form I suppose imperial, but is an eighth. In this last form he comes out of the bottomless pit, has a diabolical character. It will be a Roman emperor, he is the eighth head, and *is* the beast, that is concentrates all the power in his own person. After him the world, save only the elect, will go, seeing the long-lost form of power revived in this eighth head. It is Rome, for the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sits. Of her anon. But another important element is added, (12): "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." One hour *with* the beast: mark that, because it is the definite evidence that it had not been going on since the fall of the Roman empire through the inroad of the northern nations. Those

nations broke up, and for the time destroyed the beast, gave it its deadly wound. These receive power one hour with the beast, therefore the beast must come up again. It existed at the first without these kings. Then these kings existed without it, and you have the ten kings without the beast. At the end you get the ten kings with the beast. Men form schemes, but the moment I get Scripture I can surely say we have not the beast in this form yet. What is presented here, is subsisting kingdoms, but kingdoms which have given their power, without ceasing to be kingdoms, to one head, who leads all as a whole. (14): "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." This beast with his subordinate kingdoms rises up in open hostility against the authority of Christ; while Christ comes with His armies to judge and destroy them all. God's mighty ones come down, the saints come with Christ. (15th and 16th verses): "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." This introduces us to the judgment of Babylon, of Rome, of the great whore, the mother of harlots and abominations. We see, not a spiritual change, but her utter destruction by the beast and the ten kings, the ruin of priestcraft. They pull it all to pieces, and devour its wealth, and destroy it utterly, wearied with its dominions and falseness. It had deserved it. But it is not the power of good. "For God hath put

in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and to give their kingdom *unto the beast*, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

It is a perfect riddle how people who profess to receive Scripture have invented all sorts of notions as to the course of events connected with Christianity in this world. The moment I come to Scripture they are all gone. Men may talk as they like about the steady growth of religion in the world, and the way in which God's word will remove the power of evil from it. It is directly stated that when the beast and the horns destroy the corrupt power which had long ruled them and made the nations drunk with her fornications, they give their kingdom to the beast. You will find at the end of the 19th chapter God's dealings with the beast, 14th to 20th verse: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the

horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."—And the false prophet, which is the second beast (21st verse)—"And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." A strong figure drawn from Ezekiel, of judgment and destruction. There we see that power has come—not the influence of the word, whether law or gospel, but power has come in, which puts down evil power.

In the 20th chapter we have a full development of what we read in the 7th of Daniel. We get in the Revelation the history of the last beast more fully developed, that is, of the Roman empire which had already rejected Christ when on earth, in conjunction with the Jews. Consequent on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God, the Jews being set aside as a nation, the church was formed. She does not belong to the world but is the bride of Christ in heavenly places. Then when the church is caught up, the beast which seemed to have been destroyed is found in a new form, still as such, its deadly wound being healed, and as he had joined in rejecting Christ, is now in the closest connection with antichrist. At the first he deals with the Jews, makes a covenant with them, but in the last half-week of Daniel, turns against them, persecutes them, changes times and laws, makes the sacrifice and oblation to cease. The king, the antichrist, establishes idolatry, and divides their land; you read

his character in this point of view in the 11th chapter of Daniel, 36th verse: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished; for that that is determined shall be done." In a word, in Daniel, as in the part of Revelation I have referred to, is the testimony of the beast, the last form of the power which oppresses Israel when they are captive, and does so until the Lord comes and delivers though He judges them.

Now another power, the Assyrian, comes before us, Israel's great enemy when God owns them, and who will also appear on the scene in his last form in the last days, thinking, when the beast is destroyed, to possess all, but comes to his end. In the 5th verse of 10th chapter of Isaiah, we read, "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is my indignation." After giving the various instruments which God had used to chasten Israel, he comes to the last and terrible invader. That was God's indignation against the rebellious people—the indignation describing the last terrible visitation of God. Compare Isaiah xxvi. 20, 21, with Daniel xi. 36, the last words of which are also a technical expression for the short work which God will, at the end, make on the earth, as in Daniel ix. 27, and this chapter, Isaiah x., verse 23, compare Isaiah xxviii. 22. If you look now at the 25th verse, you will see what will make the force of it quite clear: "For yet a very little while and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction." That is, the whole judgment of God on Israel.—His indignation is closed in the destruction of the Assyrian.

Now, dear reader, we will turn to the 30th chap. of Isaiah, but before we do so, let us just in passing look at the passage I have referred to in the 28th chap. 14-16: "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste;" that is, they made, as we have seen, a covenant with the power of evil, but to no purpose. But the remnant who trusted the Lord and counted on His promise, though not yet delivered, nor knowing redemption as we do, yet looking, through the testimony then given, to the Son of man, the Branch whom Jehovah had made so strong for Himself; at any rate, the wise ones of Daniel and all true hearted ones resting on such testimonies as this and Isaiah viii., did not make haste or join the antichrist; while, as to the mass, the hopes they had put in him and the beast are confounded, and the scourge of this invader flows through. Afterwards, at the end, as we see in the following or 29th chapter, it is exactly the opposite (verses 4-7), the enemies who were ready to devour are destroyed. Now look at the end, at the 30th chapter, and you will find this enemy and his end: "For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the LORD shall lay upon him, it shall

be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king (or, as I believe, also for the king) it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." The grounded staff is God's decreed rod. When this is laid on the Assyrian, it is the source of joy and triumph, because of deliverance, the end of the indignation.

Turn now to the 5th chapter of Micah, where we shall see the connection of Christ with the judgment of the Assyrian and the subsequent blessing of Israel. Nothing so laid hold of a rabbi I was conversing with, as this passage (verses 1-9): "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the

Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders. And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off."

The rejected Christ is now to be great to the ends of the earth. He is the peace, secures the peace of Israel when the Assyrian—their last rod, whose destruction puts an end to the indignation—is in the land. He will at first tread in Israel's palaces, but at the end, Messiah's power destroys him, and Israel will be as a lion among the Gentiles, though as the dew of divine blessing also. The enemies of the Lord will be cut off. He will judge fully rebellious Israel, indeed, but execute vengeance and fury upon the heathen such as they have not heard. At this time, remark, the Jews are owned, seen in their land and judged as the people of God there. Daniel we have seen occupied with the Gentiles when Israel is in captivity, and Jerusalem and the land desolate. He brings all these powers to an end, but never takes up the consequent blessing. His subject is the time of the Gentiles. Ezekiel does exactly the contrary, he goes, himself a captive, up to the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and goes then right over to the end when Israel would be restored and the enemies go up against them in their land.

We will turn now to his prophecy, where you will find largely developed this other great power. Chapter xxxviii. 1, 2: "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him." The chief prince of Meshech, is properly interpreted prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal,* and then follow the names of countries which agree with the names of those of the present day under the influence of Rosh, "Russia." You will remark that in the two preceding chapters, xxxvi., and xxxvii., you have the restoration of the people and divine revival of Israel; now, when restored and quiet in the land, Gog comes up against them, xxxviii. 8, to plunder and possess the land, but it is that the heathen may know Jehovah when He is sanctified in Gog before their eyes (verse 16), they will then know by his judgments that He is Jehovah (23). In xxxix., God leaves a sixth part of them; and when judgment is thus executed, God's holy name is known in the midst of His people Israel. He will not let them pollute His holy name any more: "And the heathen shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel." He then calls on all the fowls of the air to come and feast on the slaughtered victims whom He has slain for a sacrifice; so many are they that it is seven months before the land is clean. This also is the one of whom He has spoken in old times by His servants the prophets; the Assyrian, in the last days, in whom, as these chapters plainly show, the indignation ceases. Ch. xxxviii. 14-20: "Therefore, son

* This translation, of the correctness of which I have no doubt, is that of the elder Lowth, some 150 years ago, before these prophetic views were mooted.

to man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the LORD God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou now know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus saith the LORD God; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them? And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the LORD God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heavens, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground." Ch. xxxix. 1-8: "Therefore, thou son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and leave but the sixth part of thee, and will cause thee to come up from the north parts, and will bring thee upon the mountains of Israel: and I will smite thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall

out of thy right hand. Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am the Lord. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this is the day whereof I have spoken;"—21, 22: "And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward;"—28, 29: "Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God."

I get here this other fundamental principle: when Israel is restored, then the heathen themselves, judged that it may be so, understand that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the Most High over all the earth, and submit to Him. You will see how the eighth Psalm expresses this: "O Jehovah our Lord," says Israel, when Christ is set up, not simply as Son of David, according to Psalm ii.—which will indeed now be accomplished, but

as Son of man—"How excellent is thy name in all the earth." This is the prayer of Psalm lxvii. I should multiply quotations too much were I to quote all the Psalms which speak of this. I will allude to a remarkable series—xciv. to c. xciv. calls for judgment; xcv. summons Israel to repentance; xcvi. the heathen are called to own Jehovah, for He is coming to judge the world in righteousness: in xcvii. the Lord is come and has made known His salvation; in xcix. He is known upon the earth again, and is sitting between the cherubim; and c. calls on all nations to come and worship Him now that His throne is set up on the earth for blessing. The cry for vengeance and deliverance is the cry of the remnant from the time of God's bringing back the people till His sitting on the throne of judgment. He will send deliverance by power. The throne of iniquity will not share the power with Him. Now grace calls souls from the evil to come to God and to go to heaven, and grace characterizes the Christian, though he knows vengeance will come.

I have gone through the passages which give us the history of the beast, and a sufficient number of those which speak of the Assyrian, to have a distinct idea of these two powers now concentrated in Western and Eastern Europe. Zechariah never speaks of the Assyrian. He belonged to the captivity of Israel, though the Jews were restored that Messiah might be presented to them; but the post-captivity prophets do not call the Jews God's people unless speaking of their future; and the other prophets, those before the captivity, never speak of the beast as such, because Israel was owned, God's throne still there. Ezekiel we have seen goes over from Babylon to Israel again in the land. We

have more directly to say to the beasts, because the time is going on in which they rule; only that in result it becomes open rebellion, there is a raising up of the beast from a seemingly fatal wound in an utterly diabolical character. God has put into the hearts of a little remnant of the Jews then to look to Him. But the nation blossoms and buds, and seems as if it was beginning a time of full prosperity in its own land. But then it is broused and eaten down, the resort of beasts and birds of prey. These are judged and Israel is received and blessed. And if, says the apostle, the falling away of them be the riches of the Gentiles, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead to the world?

All this calls our hearts, beloved, to a far more divine apprehension that our portion is in heaven while Christ is rejected; and that Christ having been rejected, Christians are; and that Christ being in heaven, their conversation or citizenship is there also. No living here any more, though we pass through it as pilgrims and strangers. What I have to do is to convince the world that there is a power which delivers from it, to manifest Christ and Christ's motives in it. If ye do well and suffer for it, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. The danger for the saints now is, that instead of seeing evil going on and rising up to a head against the Lord, man is thinking of improving the world and bringing in good. What is before us is, that "in the last days perilous times shall come." But men are wise in their own conceits, and fancy they will do better than Christ and the apostles; not make Christians for God, but improve the earth. The testimony of God is that the professing church and the world are both ripening

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